

AGENDA

Meeting: STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE
Place: The Pratchett Room - County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN
Date: Wednesday 10 July 2013
Time: 10.30 am

Please direct any enquiries on this Agenda to Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, direct line 01225 713035 or email roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications on direct lines (01225) 713114/713115.

This Agenda and all the documents referred to within it are available on the Council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Membership:

Cllr Allison Bucknell
Cllr Mike Hewitt
Cllr Jon Hubbard
Cllr David Jenkins
Cllr Gordon King

Cllr David Pollitt
Cllr Jane Scott OBE
Cllr John Smale
Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Substitutes:

Cllr Desna Allen
Cllr Rosemary Brown
Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr Peter Hutton

Cllr Mark Packard
Cllr Ian Thorn
Cllr Anthony Trotman

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PART I

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies for absence**

2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** *(Pages 1 - 6)*

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2013. (Copy attached)

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

Statements

If you would like to make a statement at this meeting on any item on this agenda, please register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting. Up to 3 speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item. Please contact the officer named on the front of the agenda for any further clarification.

Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution. Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of the agenda no later than 5pm on **Wednesday 3 July 2013**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

6 **Flexible Employee Benefits Report** *(Pages 7 - 10)*

A report by the Service Director, HR & OD is attached.

7 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered as a matter of urgency. Urgent items of a confidential nature may be considered under Part II of this agenda.

PART II

Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed

None

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STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2013 AT THE PRATCHETT ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr John Smale (Vice Chairman) and Cllr Stuart Wheeler

Also Present:

Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Peter Hutton and Cllr Anthony Trotman

12 **Membership of the Committee**

Resolved:

To note that at its Annual Meeting on 14 May 2013, the Council

- (1) appointed the following councillors to serve on this Committee for the ensuing year

Conservative (5)

Cllr A Bucknell
Cllr M Hewitt
Cllr J Scott
Cllr J Smale
Cllr S Wheeler

Lib. Dem. (3)

Cllr J Hubbard
Cllr J Jenkins
Cllr G King

UKIP (1)

Cllr D Pollitt

Substitutes

Cllr P Hutton
Cllr P Evans
Cllr A Trotman

Cllr D Allen
Cllr R Brown
Cllr M Packard
Cllr I Thorn

- (2) and named Cllr Allison Bucknell as Chairman and Cllr John Smale as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

13 **Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Jane Scott.

14 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9 January 2013.

Arising therefrom

Minute No. 2 – Update on Equality and Diversity – Dedicated Personal Care Room

The Chairman referred to a verbal update made at the previous meeting that a dedicated Personal Care Room had been made available to both visitors and staff by Facilities Management on the ground floor of New County Hall. However, the room had remained locked and the Committee had requested that access should be checked out and the outcome reported back to the following meeting.

It was reported that the room was kept locked owing to the amount of expensive equipment the room contained but a radar key was available from Main Reception if required. Members requested that a notice be fixed to the door of the Personal Care Room stating this and also to all other dedicated Personal Care Rooms stating where a radar key could be obtained.

15 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

16 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

17 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or councillors' questions.

18 **Appointment of Sub-Committees**

Resolved:

To appoint members to serve on the sub-committees of this Committee for the ensuing year as set out below:-

- (a) **Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee**
Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jon Hubbard & Cllr Stuart Wheeler.
(Substitute Members: Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Gordon King, Cllr Jane Scott & Cllr John Smale.)
- (b) **Appeals Sub-Committee**
Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr David Jenkins & Cllr Stuart Wheeler.
(Substitute Members: Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Gordon King & Cllr John Smale.)
- (c) **Grievance Appeals Sub-Committee**
Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Mike Hewitt & Cllr Gordon King.
(Substitute Members: Cllr Peter Evans, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr David Jenkins & Cllr Tony Trotman.)

19 **Senior Officers' Employment Sub-Committee**

Resolved:

- (1) To receive and note the minutes of the Senior Officers' Employment Sub-Committee meeting held on 18 December 2012.
- (2) To request that in future only those sections of reports which contained personal details as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1072, be considered in private.

20 **Delivering the Business Plan - December 2012**

The Committee received a quarterly workforce report, excluding fire, police and schools staff, for the quarter ended 31 December 2012 concerning:-

Staffing Levels
Sickness Absence
New Health and Safety RIDDOR related injuries
New Disciplinary and Grievance Cases
Voluntary Staff Turnover
Employee Costs

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

21 **Delivering the Business Plan - March 2013**

The Committee received a quarterly workforce report, excluding fire, police and schools staff, for the quarter ended 31 March 2013 concerning:-

Staffing Levels
Sickness Absence
New Health and Safety RIDDOR related injuries
New Disciplinary and Grievance Cases
Voluntary Staff Turnover
Employee Costs

During discussion the following points were highlighted:-

- The headcount (full time equivalent FTE) during this quarter had decreased by 37 to 3889, a decrease of 0.9%. The ratio of managers to employees remained at 1:8, the required level being at least 1:6.
- Sickness rates during the quarter had decreased to 2.3 FTE days per FTE, this being 0.3 FTE days lower than for the same quarter in 2012. The sickness rate for the 2012-13 financial year was 8.7 FTE days per FTE, this being 1.2 FTE lower than the benchmark rate. Members enquired as to how much long term and short term sickness recorded was due to stress related illnesses and requested that this information be sent to them after the meeting.
- There had been 191 redundancies that had taken place from April to September 2012.
- It was noted that for the second consecutive quarter, Transformation had had the largest reduction in agency spend (-£91,752 compared to the last quarter). This had contributed to an overall reduction in agency spend of £40,704 for the quarter ended 31 March 2013. Members requested details of the total accumulative spend over the whole of the financial year 2012-13 be sent to them after the meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) **To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) **To request that the number of agency workers and consultants be shown separately in future reports.**

22 **Wiltshire Council Staff Survey 2012**

The Committee received a report showing overall results of the Wiltshire Council Staff Survey 2012.

It was noted that the Council had last surveyed its employees in February 2011 from which staff had stated that they wanted:

- More consistent and regular information
- Greater respect and recognition

- A greater understanding on why decisions are made
- To be consulted when decisions are made

In response the Council had:

- Introduced regular blogs from senior managers
- Undertaken hub visits from senior management
- Introduced The Directory and Microsoft Lync
- Arranged employee and management forums
- Introduced the behaviours framework
- Introduced HR Direct
- Introduced new uses of social media such as Twitter
- Introduced additional corporate awards
- Introduced a new and improved appraisal solution
- Agreed a yearly staff survey to capture staff views
- Offered senior management attendance to attend team meetings upon invite
- Communicated the 2011-2015 Business Plan

The Committee was pleased to note that the response rate from staff responding to the Survey had increased from 55% in 2011 to 60% in respect of the recent Survey carried out in November 2012. It was also noted that the positive feedback responses had all increased since 2011.

The analysis of the Survey had also shown that, once again, there were four organisational wide priority areas for improvement which were as follows:-

1. Wiltshire Council employees need to receive more consistent and regular information and, in particular, clarity is needed on why changes are being made by our leadership team.
2. Communication needs to be open and honest in order to give staff confidence in our leaders.
3. The Council needs to further develop a culture where respect and recognition is embedded.
4. Wiltshire needs to ensure that it is committed to customer satisfaction and that all our staff are part of this.

The Committee was informed that officers were considering these four areas where improvements were required, together with other areas where discontent had been expressed, and responses on actions being taken would be requested later in the year.

It was suggested that future Staff Surveys should include a column showing numbers of staff who had not responded to specific questions.

There was a general discussion about the Council's appraisal system and it was emphasised that it was mandatory for all staff to receive an annual appraisal and quarterly reviews. An electronic appraisal system was now in use which assisted in the monitoring and tracking of appraisals. It was suggested that consideration be given to providing a training session on the appraisal scheme for Members of this Committee.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.
- (2) To request that future Staff Surveys should include statistics showing the number of staff who did not respond to specific questions.
- (3) To request the provision of a training session on the appraisal scheme for members of this Committee.

23 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

- (1) To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 10 July 2013 in the Pratchett Room at New County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.
- (2) To note that an additional meeting of the Committee had been arranged to be held on Wednesday 26 June 2013 in the Pratchett Room at New County Hall, Trowbridge to consider a report on an urgent staffing matter prior to a decision being made by full Council on Tuesday 9 July 2013. A short training session would be held at 3.30pm, during which certain policies and aspects of the subject would be explained prior to the start of the formal meeting at 4.00pm.

24 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items of business.

(Duration of meeting: 11.20 am - 12.35 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115

Flexible employee benefits report

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the outcome of a recent review of the council's current staff benefits offering and the proposal to launch a new staff discount scheme.

Background

2. Employee reward includes all element of pay, pension, salary sacrifice schemes, other discounts and non-tangible benefits. The reward package available to staff can aid recruitment, retention, staff engagement, motivation and morale.
3. The current Wiltshire Council staff benefits website provides employees with access to the salary sacrifice schemes and discount deals available to staff.

Reason for review

4. There has been no cost of living pay award for any staff since April 2009 (since 2008 for Hay graded managers). There is also a two year increment freeze for all Wiltshire Council employees which runs until April 2014.
5. A key priority of the people strategy is to develop a new reward package to improve employee engagement. The 2012 staff survey results showed that, whilst employee engagement had increased since 2011, only 47% of staff were satisfied with the total benefits package they received.
6. As an action from the staff survey we have reviewed our current staff benefits schemes and are proposing changes to ensure the benefits we offer are flexible, fit for purpose and helps us to deliver improved staff engagement, reward and recognition.
7. Whilst the budget for any pay increase is fixed, the provision of a range of discounts for major retailers (including groceries and household items) can make a genuine impact on day to day spending.
8. A number of companies offer tailored employee benefits sites with access to discounts for major brands. Their size and reach enable them to negotiate much better discounts than a single organisation could achieve. They can also provide all of the administration, site maintenance, management information and promotional material.

9. Recently several large authorities, including Birmingham City Council, have launched employee benefits websites and seen a major impact on employee engagement. The Birmingham scheme, which has been in place for 15 months has seen spending through the site in excess of £2m, with a real saving to staff of around £145,000.

Options considered

10. Consideration was given to a re-design and review of the internal website. However we would not be able to access discounts with major retailers and the amount of administration and resource we would require to invest would not add value in terms of the types of savings employees could be expected to make.
11. There are some free benefits schemes but they have relatively small numbers of brands and retailers signed up, and the discounts they offer are similar to those provided on our current site. These sites operate by taking a commission when employees spend with particular brands and they therefore promote brands which provide the best commission and the discounts that are passed on to employees are lower. These schemes are no better than individuals could find and sign up for online themselves. We do not consider this option to be in the interest of employees.
12. Following a review of the schemes available the preferred option is to use a company who provide an externally hosted website with links in to major retailers. There are several local government framework agreements available that provide this service and which we could join.
13. Having reviewed the benefits on offer and the benefits for employees the preferred framework is the North Yorkshire framework agreement with Asperity. Asperity offer the largest discounts and the broadest range of retailers. They also have an excellent reputation in both public and private sector and are the provider used by several large authorities including Kent, North Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Norfolk and Birmingham City Council.
14. We would continue to support local discounts and Asperity would enable us to link through from their website to locally agreed discounts and salary sacrifice schemes.
15. Asperity provide:
 - Support with communication strategy and promotional materials
 - Website customisation (Wiltshire Council branding and colours);
 - Management information system – allowing us to generate reports of take up, spend and savings;
 - A smartphone app allowing access from iphone/ipad, android, windows and blackberry mobile devices;
 - Individual login (with the ability for up to 4 additional logons for family members at no extra cost);
 - Over 200 retailers offering a discount on reloadable gift cards or vouchers (with no postage costs);
 - Over 1000 retailers offering cashback for online spend;

- Discount rates at over 2500 gyms and health clubs;
 - A telephone helpdesk (for those without online access) available 7 days per week.
16. Local retailers would be able to offer staff discounts through the asperity website. All retailers who currently offer discounts through our staff benefits website would be approached to ask if they wish to continue to offer this discount and to explain the changes.
 17. It is proposed that the scheme would be offered to non-schools staff, staff in schools where Wiltshire Council is the employer and elected members.
 18. It is also proposed to offer the scheme to groups such as foster carers, to recognise the contribution they make. The scheme does not require these groups to have Wiltshire council IT accounts or to be on the council payroll.

Financial Implications

19. The Asperity reward gateway scheme provides a range of employee benefits and costs £1.208 per employee per annum, based on a maximum of 17,000 accounts, plus an additional one off cost of £3,000 to customise and set up the website. This means that the cost over a three year contract would be £64,623.
20. To put this in context - to apply this as a salary increase to all staff would mean a pay increase of £1.56 per annum per employee (approximately 3p per week).
21. An example of potential benefits to an individual employee who uses the available discounts could be:

Retailer	Discount	Spend	Saving
Asda or Sainsburys	5%	£50 per week £2600 per annum	£2.50 per week £130 per annum
Tesco direct	4.5% (cash back)	£100 on Home/Garden items	£4.50
Marks & Spencer	7%	£500 per annum	£35
Boots	10%	£500 per annum	£50
Argos	8%	£400	£32
Wickes/B&Q	10%	£500	£50
i-tunes vouchers	7%	£100	£7
Thomas Cook	Cashback	Any package holiday	£60
Orange	Cashback	Phone contract	£80

		(over £20 per month)	
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22. This review is considered to be a corporate priority under the People Strategy action plan and would be funded by money set aside for implementation of this plan.
23. It is proposed that the scheme is planned for launch in mid September 2013 to non schools staff and elected members, with a roll out planned for later in the year for foster carers and staff in schools where Wiltshire Council is the employer.

Consultation

24. The Corporate Leadership Team have confirmed their support for the new scheme.
25. Cllr Wheeler briefed Cabinet colleagues in early June who confirmed their support.
26. Unions have been briefed and have confirmed their support for this scheme.
27. We are currently consulting with the communications team, HR Manager Stakeholder panel and the Wiltshire Fostering Association about how to launch the scheme most effectively.

Recommendation

28. That Staffing Policy Committee approve this new staff benefits scheme.

Barry Pirie
Service Director
HR & OD

Report Author: Paula Marsh, Human Resources Strategy and Policy team

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None