

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr John Smale (Vice Chairman), Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute), Cllr Peter Evans (Substitute), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Bob Jones MBE and Cllr Graham Wright.

41 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jane Scott OBE (who was substituted by Cllr Tony Trotman) and Cllr Stuart Wheeler (who was substituted by Cllr Peter Evans).

42 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2015.

43 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

44 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

1. Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation

Congratulations to Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police who after a lengthy and rigorous national audit had received accreditation from Central Government recognising that our infrastructure and networks are secure.

On Wednesday 19 August 2015, the Cabinet Office informed us that we had received the Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation. We were

also informed that the Home Office, who controlled the Public Services Network for Policing (PSNP), had granted accreditation for Wiltshire Police.

The PSN is a Central Government secure network enabling sensitive information to be passed between departments. Run by the Department of Work and Pensions, all communications between Central Government departments and Local Authorities and other public sector organisations MUST go via a PSN connection. In order to have a connection to the PSN, agencies and Local Authorities are required to prove that their networks are secure to a specific standard, set by PSN/PSNP, called the Code of Connection.

The PSN/PSNP connection allows the Council and Police to provide services such as Tell Us Once, Benefits payments, and access to the Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND), all highly sensitive information applications.

This year's PSN audit was the first since most services moved into the hubs, and the first since taking on ICT for Wiltshire Police, so not only were we being audited against our changed environment, we also had to contend with the challenges of the Police environment, essentially two full PSN audits at the same time.

2. Windows XP remediation

Alongside this, Microsoft had announced that they had withdrawn support for the Windows XP operating system used across the Police estate, and that they were also withdrawing support for the Windows Server 2003 Operating System and the Structured Query Language (SQL) 2005 database platform on which a large number of the more legacy applications were hosted on. This added another dimension to the PSN, removal of obsolete software is a critical control.

Over the course of 6 months and working to extremely tight timescales, the ICT team upgraded 283 2003 Servers (~206 have been decommissioned), 20 SQL 2003/5 Servers (~11 have been decommissioned), 46 Applications, and 604 XP systems.

Now that Wiltshire Police have achieved accreditation, work can begin on the transition of their services from the old GCSx system to the new PSN based system, which is expected to complete in November 2015.

3. HR Team

The HR team had just been informed that it has been shortlisted for a number of HR awards taking place later this year as follows:

The Personnel Today Awards 2015 (award ceremony in November 2015)

Shortlisted for the 3 awards below:

- Award for Excellence in Public Service HR
- Award for Managing Change
- HR Team of the Year Award

The Engagement Excellence Awards 2015 (award ceremony in September 2015)

Shortlisted for the award below:

- Most effective re-launch campaign (for Wiltshire Rewards)

4. Apprenticeship success - PPMA Apprentice of the Year 2015

Megan Mouny, a former apprentice in the Cabinet Office, had been shortlisted as a finalist for the PPMA Apprentice of the Year awards. Megan was encouraged to apply by Cathy Hucker, Developer Practitioner /Assessor who supported her through her apprenticeship development programme, and her former supervisor, Victoria Moloney. Megan would now take part in two days of individual and group activities and presentations at Warwick University in September 2015. We all wish Megan all the best in the next selection round. Since completing her apprenticeship Megan successfully applied and was recruited to a PA role working directly to Parvis Khansari, Associate Director Highways & Transport.

5. Health and Safety (H&S) benchmarking

Colleagues in H&S benchmark accident data were rated with 19 other unitary authorities in respect of all local authority employees including schools. For 2014/15 period Wiltshire ranked 3/20 in respect of overall accident rates; and 2/20 in respect of reportable accidents to HSE, an overall top ranking of all of the larger authorities.

Members of the Committee joined with the Chairman in warmly congratulating all these members of staff in achieving such excellent results.

45 **Public Participation**

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

46 **Update on Phase 3 of the Social Work Recruitment Campaign**

The Committee received a report by the Associate Director, People & Business, which provided a further update on the targeted campaign to recruit social workers across adult's and children's social care. The report outlined progress on phase 3 of the campaign which commenced on 1 April 2015.

The Committee was reminded that the social work recruitment campaign had commenced in September 2014 and had been broken down into three phases.

Phases 1 and 2 had run from September 2014 until March 2015. It was noted that a progress report on phases 1 & 2 had been provided to this Committee on 6 May 2015 when it had been reported that 127 vacancies had been advertised in 36 roles across operational children's and adult social care following which 75 candidates had been offered and had accepted posts.

The total number of vacancies as at August 2015 stood at 197 with the majority, 143, being within operational children's services. It was reported that the number of vacancies had risen during Phase 3 mainly due to the creation of new posts.

A number of new recruitment and retention programmes had been developed and were being implemented during Phase 3. These included:

- 'Return to Social Work' scheme which will attract qualified social workers who have taken time out of the profession and who need to regain HCPC registration to practice again (launching September 2015)
- A University of West of England student social work bursary scheme, (launching September 2015)
- Step up to Social Work, a national DfE sponsored 'fast-track' scheme which allows candidates to become fully qualified (children's) social workers within 14 months. Wiltshire Council is taking 6 candidates, 3 of whom are internal council employees
- Grow Your Own – a Wiltshire Council sponsored programme putting internal candidates through a degree to become fully qualified social workers (launching September 2016).

Operational children's services was implementing a new approach to aid with effective succession and new recruitment and retention opportunities. This involved establishing 'pods' of four newly qualified social workers (NQSW) with an 'Aspiring manager' (new role) to support, mentor and assess these NQSWs through their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). This new model would mean a more sustainable approach to addressing the (national and local) shortage of experienced social workers through more robust succession planning as NQSWs gained the practice experience and moved upwards through the organisation. There would also be a corresponding drop in agency spend as a more stable, permanent workforce was created.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and to request a further update following completion of Phase 3 of the recruitment campaign in March 2016.

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, People & Business which presented an interim updated version of the annual equality and diversity employment monitoring report to facilitate the move to a new reporting period which was closer to the statutory publishing date. It was noted that the Council was required to produce workforce equality and diversity information annually as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in line with the Equality Act 2010.

It was noted that historically the headcount figures had been based on workforce data on 1 April each year but from the current year the reporting date was being moved to 1 October in order to bring the date nearer to the January publishing date, thus ensuring that the figures were as up to date as possible.

In addition to the data collected and published on sex, disability, ethnicity and age, work was taking place to extend the data to include religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, gender reassignment and caring responsibilities. This improved data would form part of the Council's equality objectives. It was noted that the recent staff survey asked staff for anonymous data on the extended range of protected characteristics.

Members were informed that in general the data contained in the report was broadly in line with the previous year's data but with some slight fluctuations.

During discussion, reference was made to the small number of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff appointed and also women in more senior positions. However, Members were pleased to note the success in attracting young people to the various apprenticeship schemes and hoped that this success would continue, thus increasing the number of young people to the Council's workforce.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

48 **Delivering the Business Plan - June 2015**

The Committee received a quarterly workforce report, excluding fire, police and school staff, for the quarter ending June 2015, concerning:-

- Staffing Levels
- Sickness Absence
- New Health and Safety RIDDOR related injuries
- New Disciplinary, Grievance and Absence Cases
- Voluntary Staff Turnover
- Employee costs
- Additional financial information

Employee Diversity

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

49 **Workplace Health Update**

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, Public Health, which provided an update on the progress of the Workplace Health project and which set out a broad overview of short and medium term plans.

It was noted that this project was aimed at raising awareness of workplace health issues and influencing the management of those health risks both by managers and by individual members of staff. Achievement within these goals would lead to accreditation for the nationally recognised Workplace Well-Being Charter.

Members were informed that one area of particular prioritisation was mental health. There would be a strong emphasis in the Workplace Health project to raise the awareness of mental health conditions and to reduce or remove the workforce stigma associated with the disclosure of mental distress, anxiety or stress and any associated formal diagnosis.

Members were pleased to note that the mental health strand of the project would use strategies such as e-learning, individual and group well-being risk assessments and bespoke management training to improve understanding and confidence.

Resolved:

To support and endorse the Workplace Health project and to request a further update in due course.

50 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 4 November 2015, in the Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

51 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.25 am)

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

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