

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2016 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Bob Jones MBE and Cllr Graham Wright

24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John Smale (who was substituted by Cllr Tony Trotman) and Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE.

25 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 May 2016.

26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

27 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman referred to the recent marriage of Paul Rouemaine and Emily?? who were both previously employed in the Human Resources Unit and known to members of this Committee. Members of the Committee joined the Chairman in extending their best wishes for a long and happy marriage.

28 Public Participation

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

29 Workplace Health Charter Update

The Committee received a report by the Associate Director, Public Health, which provided an update on the accreditation outcomes for Workplace Health Charter status.

It was explained that the Workplace Health project was aimed at raising awareness of workplace health issues and influencing the management of those health risks both by management and by individuals. Achievement of these goals led to accreditation for the nationally recognised Workplace Health Charter.

The principal objective was a shift in individual and corporate behaviours which were perpetuated to become norms of behaviour, thus creating a workplace culture in which preventative health management was embraced.

The Council submitted its body of evidence against each of the following eight criteria:

- Leadership
- Absence management
- Health and safety
- Mental health
- Smoking
- Physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Alcohol and substance misuse

The Council was awarded a rating of 'Excellence' in each of these categories and it was thought that Wiltshire Council could well be the first local authority in England to achieve this rating.

It was noted that there were schemes to offer staff discounted membership of gyms and health clubs and also for the purchase of cycles.

Members noted that healthier staff, achieved through heightened awareness of lifestyle choices plus positive and early management support in the workplace, would lead to cost savings through better attendance, better performance, higher morale, better retention, fewer incidents, lower litigation levels and reputational gains.

Resolved:

- (1) To welcome the outcomes of the accreditation procedure, recognise the enormous amount of excellent work that had been undertaken by staff and to congratulate all those involved in that work.**

- (2) **To endorse the ongoing benefits realisation plan and to request an update of progress made in 12 months' time.**

30 **Dignity at Work and Grievance Policy & Procedure**

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, People and Business, which presented amendments to the Dignity at Work and Grievance Policy and Procedures.

It was explained that the main changes included bringing the formal stage of the dignity at work policy in to line with the grievance policy, the inclusion of a statement of commitment in the dignity at work policy and changes around the grievance clarification meeting in the grievance procedure.

Resolved:

To approve the changes to the Dignity at Work and Grievance Policies and Procedures.

31 **Outcome of local trade union negotiations for changes to terms and conditions and update on national pay negotiations**

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, People & Business which provided an update on the outcome of local trade union negotiations and also on the national pay negotiations.

Members noted that the Council's budget for 2016/17 required savings of £25.254m, whilst still delivering the priorities over the next year. In order to deliver the savings required a total of £2.5m savings had been allocated to be provided from changes to terms and conditions.

Negotiations between the Council and the recognised trade unions (UNISON, Unite and GMB) commenced in February 2016, the aim being to try and reach agreement on ways in which these savings could be found. The Unions had also been invited to put forward suggestions as to how the savings target could be delivered.

Eventually the following proposals had been agreed between the Council and the three trade unions and subsequently endorsed following a conducted ballot of trade union members:

- An incremental freeze for two years.
- An increase of two days annual leave per annum.
- To introduce a "purchase of annual leave policy", which should generate income as managers would not be expected to cover the absences. This would not be available to Council term only staff and school support staff.

- No further changes to terms and conditions for four years.

The Committee was also informed that national negotiations were still taking place regarding the annual pay award.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update on changes to terms and conditions.**
- (2) To note that the new policy for “Purchase of Annual Leave” would be considered later in the meeting.**
- (3) To note that national negotiations were still taking place on the annual pay award and that the Committee would be kept up to date regarding progress on this matter.**

32 **Purchasing Annual Leave Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Associate Director, People & Business which presented the purchase of annual leave policy which would give employees the opportunity to purchase two weeks additional leave each year (pro-rata for part-time employees). This could be used for special occasions or personal reasons and was aimed at providing greater work/life balance for employees.

It was noted that the introduction of this scheme was as a result of the recent local negotiations between the trade unions and the Council to deliver savings from staffing costs.

During discussion Members were assured that the introduction of this policy would not lead to any increases in costs as managers would be expected not to cover the absences.

Members also sought assurances that staff were taking their allotted annual leave entitlement and requested a short report at the next meeting explaining how the taking of leave was being monitored and recorded.

Resolved:

- (1) To approve the purchasing of additional annual leave policy.**
- (2) To request a short report at a future meeting setting out how annual leave was being recorded and monitored.**

33 **Delivering the Business Plan - March 2016**

The Committee received a workforce report, excluding fire, police and school staff, for the quarter ended 31 March 2016, 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

It was noted that the headcount across Wiltshire had seen a decrease of 56 employees (-1.2%) since the last quarter, with the number of employees now being 4772.

The Committee was very pleased to note that in line with the decrease in agency use during the quarter, the spend on agency staff had also decreased significantly. Operational Children's Services had seen the largest decrease in agency spend over the quarter, spending £0.60m (-£140,465).

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

34 **Careers Website - Performance and Progress 2015/16**

The Committee considered a report by the Associate Director, People & Business which contained:

- A complete set of 2015/16 performance data for the careers website which had been launched on 11 May 2015.
- Progress made against the improvements identified in the report to this Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2015.
- Details of further developments planned to improve attraction and recruitment.

Members noted that the number of applications commenced from use of the careers website had started to increase in the last quarter by 67 more than during the previous quarter. The careers website did not take into account whether the application had been completed and submitted. However, when this data was compared with the number of applications started and submitted within the Council's applicant tracking system (Talentlink), the data followed the same pattern.

It was also noted that the candidate satisfaction survey was being sent to successful candidates on completion of the interview process. Although survey response rates were low, with only 21 responses received for quarters 1 to 4, the majority of answers were positive and did not indicate any causes for concern.

It was pointed out that Glassdoor analytics (a jobs and recruiting site) showed that the number of people engaging with the site had increased. The total number of page views had reached 7,000. Monthly views were steadily increasing after a peak in October 2015 when the Council became an engaged employer with Glassdoor.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To request a further update on the performance of the website in 12 months.**

35 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 6 July 2016, in the Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

36 Urgent Items

The Chairman announced that she had accepted the confidential matter in Minute No 38 below as an item of urgent business, on the recommendation of the Associate Director, People & Business, because the matter could not wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 6 July 2016.

37 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Minute No. 23 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

38 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Minute No. 39 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

39 **Appointment of Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee**

The Committee was informed that there was a need to appoint members and substitute members to the Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee to hear a grievance against senior officers. It was likely that the Sub-Committee would need to meet before the next meeting of this Committee on 6 July 2016, hence the reason for taking this as an urgent item.

The appointment of the Sub-Committee would need to take place after full Council had approved the appointment to committees, including the Staffing Policy Committee, at its Annual General Meeting on 10 May 2016.

Resolved:

To delegate the appointment of members and substitute members of the Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee to the Associate Director, People & Business in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee and to report the membership back to this Committee at the earliest opportunity.

(Duration of meeting: 11.30 am - 12.40 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

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