

## STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Peter Evans (Substitute) and Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute)

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#### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Richard Clewer, Andy Phillips, Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE and Hayley Spencer.

Councillor Phillips was substituted by Councillor Peter Evans.

Baroness Scott was substituted by Councillor Tony Trotman.

#### 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2017 were presented and it was,

#### Resolved:

**To approve and sign as a true and correct record.**

#### 3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

#### 4 Chairman's Announcements

It was announced that since the last meeting Jo Pitt had been appointed as Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD). On behalf of the Committee the Chairman congratulated Jo Pitt on her appointment.

#### 5 Public Participation

There were no public in attendance.

6 **Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the Senior Officers Employment Sub-Committee from 17 October 2017 and 1 November 2017 were received.

**Resolved:**

**To note the minutes.**

7 **Pay Policy Statement**

A report from Jo Pitt, Director of HR and OD, was received, presented by Amanda George, HR Strategic Delivery Manager.

Under Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 every local authority must prepare a pay policy statement for every financial year. The policy had been updated to include a revised introduction on forthcoming legislation that would impact on the council's pay arrangements such as implications arising from the apprenticeship levy and increase to the national living wage. Other updates included information on recommencement of annual increment increases for all staff from April 2018, updates on number of council employees, pay ratios, and other clarifications as detailed in the report.

The Committee discussed the updated policy, requesting detail on the reporting of the gender pay gap, noting that as a local authority the council had a high number of female, part time staff, which would affect the average pay between men and women. However, equal pay policies were in place to ensure those in the same roles received the same pay.

Other issues discussed included improvements in recruitment, and the improved ratio between the highest and lowest paid employees

Upon the moving of Councillor Allison Bucknell, seconded by Councillor Tony Jackson, at the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**To approve the draft policy to be presented at Full Council on 20 February 2018 on the understanding that the budget figure will be reviewed and updated prior to Full Council approval.**

8 **Time Off for Fostering Policy**

A report from Jo Pitt, Director of HR and OD, was received, presented by Amanda George, HR Strategic Delivery Manager.

It was detailed that the 'Time off for fostering policy' was part of the recruitment campaign to increase the number of foster carers, and to enable the council to be officially designated by the Fostering Network as a 'fostering friendly

authority'. This would enable the council to lead the way in encouraging other organisations to adopt similar policies.

The proposed policy allows additional paid time off in a 12-month period for prospective and approved foster carers, including up to 3 days in total to attend assessment and initial training prior to approval; up to 1 day to attend the approving fostering panel; and up to five days in total to attend a child's in care review, annual foster carer review and other associated meetings required when fostering children.

The Committee discussed the proposed policy, recognising it as an important measure to improve recruitment of foster carers, noting that at present only 45% of Looked After Children within the council's area were being fostered, against a target of 75%. It was noted that it was possible the policy could be challenged on equalities grounds as this particular group of staff were receiving more favourable treatment, but accepted the intention was to offer positive support in support of a vital service, and that 29 other local authorities had already adopted similar policies.

Upon the moving of Councillor Allison Bucknell, seconded by Councillor Tony Jackson, at the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**To approve the 'Time off for fostering' policy and procedure to support current employees who are foster carers or wish to become foster carers, and so become a fostering friendly authority.**

9 **Quarterly Workforce Report: July - September 2017**

A report was presented by Stuart Honeyball, HR Systems and Insight Manager, and Michael Taylor, Workforce Insight Analyst, detailing the Quarterly Workforce Report for July-September 2017.

Details were received on the figures for long term absences, which had improved slightly on the previous quarter, and HR was continuing to work with Heads of Service to improve how they handled such situations. It was confirmed 'long term absence' was defined as greater than 20 days. It was also reported that the number of under 25-year-olds working with the council had decreased, however it was noted that this was the result of the transfer of staff to casual contracts, people ageing out of the age bracket, and that the council was still recruiting more under 25s than it was losing.

Other details reported including a review of the leaving process to improve the existing exit questionnaire, the inclusion of an apprenticeship co-ordinator within HR, and the long-term issue of social worker recruitment and retention, which had improved since the use of a market supplement.

The Committee also discussed potential ways of rotating staff in stressful roles to reduce pressures and prevent sickness absences, as well as the future

presentation of data to the Committee on a regular basis, with requests for additional narrative and service focused detail as required.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was,

**Resolved:**

**To note the Quarterly Workforce Report.**

10 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 7 March 2018. A training and briefing session on the People Strategy would take place prior to the meeting.

11 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.35 am)

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