

Staffing Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 3 October 2013.

Present:-

Spencer Flower (Chairman)
Robert Gould (Vice-Chairman)
Trevor Jones, Paul Kimber and John Wilson

Officers:

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Paul Kent (Director for Corporate Resources), Sheralyn Huntingford (Head of Human Resources) and Rebecca Thomas (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

(Notes:(1) These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Staffing Committee to be held on **28 November 2013**.

(2) **RECOMMENDED** in this type denotes that the approval of the County Council is required.)

Apology for Absence

101. No apology for absence was received.

Code of Conduct

102. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

103. The minutes of the meetings held on 29 July, 6 September and 11 September 2013 were confirmed and signed.

Staff Consultative Panel Minutes

104. The minutes of the Staff Consultative Panel meeting held on 12 July 2013 were received.

Noted

Employee Wellbeing Strategy

105.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources on the draft Employee Wellbeing Strategy, as considered by the Staff Consultative Panel at their meeting in July 2013 and after consultation with Trade Unions. The purpose of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy was to articulate how the County Council would create a work environment that aimed to promote health and wellbeing for the mutual benefit of the organisation and its employees.

105.2 The Strategy was developed with specific references and aims in mind, and is aligned to the Forward Together programme. Members noted the key messages taken from these documents and initiatives in respect of employee wellbeing. Five priorities were proposed to describe how the Council would seek to create the appropriate work

environment and members were advised that the Strategy aimed to encourage individual responsibility for wellbeing within a wider corporate framework.

Resolved

106. That the draft Employee Wellbeing Strategy be approved.

Performance and Development Review Completion 2013/14

107.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources which advised that the Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) cycle for 2013/14 had now commenced and the period for completion of mid-year reviews was currently underway (to be reported on in January 2014). The figures showed that as at 9 August 2013, 73% of PDRs had been recorded as completed in DES. This represented a significant increase on the rates reported in previous years and took the County Council within its target completion rate of 70-90%. Service performance was mixed from 0% through to 90%. Directors had provided commentaries to support their figures.

107.2 The review of the PDR process had progressed well with changes to both the timings of the PDR cycle and the recording mechanisms for managers. It was proposed that the reporting of completion rates to the Staffing Committee be amended to reflect these new PDR cycle timings. It was noted that from next year Public Health reporting periods would be brought in line with the County Council to enable their inclusion within the report.

107.3 Alongside the review of the PDR process had been a commitment to review the role of the 'Dorset Manager' and define leadership and management in Dorset. Work had now commenced on this review with the first phase incorporating workshops with employees and managers which took place in July.

107.4 At previous meetings, the County Council's capability procedure had been of interest to members and the report also set out the steps in the procedure and the number of employees in the formal stage. The low number of employees recorded re-affirmed the importance of further developing performance management across the County Council. It was also recognised that further work with managers was critical to enable them to lead and manage performance across their teams and improvements in this area had direct links to the County Council's "Forward Together" programme.

107.5 It was noted that work to empower and support managers was key to continued improvement, but whilst the Human Resources Service would offer appropriate training courses, coaching and guidance, the Chief Executive confirmed that managers were ultimately accountable. Through interrogation of DES it was now easier to highlight areas of concern and should these not sufficiently improve it was anticipated that managers would be asked to report to the Staffing Committee personally to respond to any queries raised. This was a cultural change for the County Council.

107.6 A member asked that consideration be given to the capacity within Human Resources to facilitate and lead aspects of the change programme as outlined and requested a further report on this in due course.

Resolved

108.1 That the content of the report, including the improved performance across the authority and feedback from Directors in respect of PDR completion rates, be noted.

108.2 That the proposed changes to reporting months to the Staffing Committee on PDR completion rates be agreed.

Management of Attendance 2013/14 Quarter 1

109.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources on sickness absence performance for the period 1 July 2012 to 31 June 2013, the first quarter of reporting for 2013/14. Commentaries on sickness absence by Directorate and Service were also provided.

109.2 The County Council's performance (excluding schools, the Dorset Waste Partnership and Public Health) for Quarter 1 was 9.38 working days per FTE against the annual target of 8.63 working days set for 2013/14. This represented an increase of 0.18 days per FTE against the full year performance for 2012/13 and an increase of 0.52 working days per FTE compared to Quarter 1 of 2012/13. An amended Appendix 2 was circulated at the meeting.

109.3 Additionally, a breakdown of reported sickness absence into long and short term absences was provided for the period 1 January to 30 June 2013 at service level. Other sickness absence data provided was based on a rolling twelve month period and was not therefore currently appropriate to compare. Future Management of Attendance reports would include a short and long term absence breakdown for the period 1 January to 30 September 2013 and a full year of reporting.

109.4 The Head of Human Resources highlighted areas of high absence across the County Council and the increasing trend. It was noted that initial indicators showed that the additional support in the management of sickness absence cases, through a pilot as reported to the Staffing Committee at their meeting on 29 July 2013, although work intensive, was delivering improvements. Consideration was being given to rolling the pilot out further and options on how to approach this, including resource implications, were being scoped.

Resolved

110.1 That the first quarter performance for sickness absence, including performance against service targets, be noted.

110.2 That the commentary received from Directorate Management Teams regarding their performance be noted.

Localism Act: Secretary of State Guidance

111.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources on the Localism Act and the requirement for the County Council to produce an annual Pay Policy Statement setting out their policies on the remuneration of their chief officers and lowest paid employees, and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and non chief officers.

111.2 The Act also required local authorities to have due regard of any Secretary of State guidance that may be issued. The report detailed key provisions of the guidance which local authorities should have due regard to, in terms of full County Council having the opportunity to vote in respect of salary and severance packages in excess of £100,000. Current approaches employed by the County Council were outlined alongside future options for consideration.

111.3 Staffing Committee recommendations in respect of salary and severance packages in excess of £100,000 would go forward to full County Council, via Standards and Governance Committee due to its potential impact on the Constitution. Any decision reached by the County Council would be reflected in the revised pay policy statement for 2014/15.

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111.4 Members carefully considered the guidance issued, but recognised that the County Council's existing practices already permitted public scrutiny and accountability whilst working within prescribed governance arrangements that allowed effective and efficient decision making to take place. Concerns were raised that an amendment, as suggested, would be detrimental to the effective running of the County Council.

Resolved

112. That the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED

113. That the County Council approve the continuation of the current arrangements in regards to:-

- (a) salary packages of new appointments in excess of £100,000;
- (b) severance packages in excess of £100,000.

Reason for Recommendation

114. The Staffing Committee are responsible for people management policies including those in respect of recruitment and severance.

Non-Directly Employed Contract Workforce – Quarter 1 2013/14

115.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director for Corporate Resources which set out expenditure on agency staff, consultancy and other non-agency workers for the first quarter of 2013/14, in order to complement the regular staffing data provided to members to complete the picture of staff resources deployed by the County Council. The report was also considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 17 September 2013.

115.2 Expenditure on agency staff was at a similar level to the previous three quarters, despite the additional requirements of the Dorset Waste Partnership during implementation and roll out of the recycle for Dorset service. Whilst expenditure on consultancy and other non-agency workers in the first quarter was a little below the average for the previous year, it was above the expenditure in the first quarter of that year.

115.3 The report also provided commentaries from Business Managers which identified main issues affecting expenditure and steps taken to manage and reduce it. Appendices to the Director's report provided key summaries and supplemental statistical information.

115.4 Members discussed and agreed that financial investment was necessary in order to recruit desirable staff for pertinent roles. In addition, the use of consultancy, agency and other non-agency staff was sometimes necessary to fulfil the needs of the County Council's business.

Resolved

116. That the report be noted.

Questions

117. No questions were asked by members under Standing Order 20(2).

Exempt Business**Exclusion of the Public****Resolved**

118. That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for minute numbers 119 to 122 because it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt

information as defined in the paragraphs indicated of Part 1 of Schedule 12A and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing that information.

New Appointments to the Public Health Service (Paragraph 4)

119.1 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Director for Corporate Resources that outlined the need for consideration of the appointment of new staff to the Public Health Service, specifically in respect of the terms and conditions of employment on which they should be employed.

119.2 Public Health staff previously employed within the NHS transferred to the County Council on 1 April 2013 under a nationally agreed transfer order that protected their NHS pay, terms and conditions of employment. The same protection was not afforded to new appointees. The report identified three options available for new appointments and the various factors to be considered in determining the pay, terms and conditions for each of the three distinct Public Health staff groups.

119.3 It was noted that there were national concerns that pay, and terms and conditions of employment reflected the role. More locally a balanced outcome taking all relevant factors into account was necessary to support effective service delivery.

Resolved

120.1 That the report be noted.

120.2 That the following approach for new Public Health appointments be adopted:

- (a) New technical/professional and support Public Health staff to be appointed on Green Book pay, terms and conditions of employment; and
- (b) New consultant Public Health staff to be appointed on NHS (Agenda for Change or Medical Consultant) pay, terms and conditions of employment.

Proposed Retirement in the Interests of the Efficiency of the Service (Paragraph 4)

121.1 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Chief Executive on the proposed retirement of the Director for Environment in the interests of the efficiency of the service.

121.2 The Chief Executive presented her report with particular reference to possible financial savings, impacts for other senior posts and the resulting recruitment process that would be undertaken.

121.3 Members discussed the proposed retirement in detail, the opportunities this presented for staff restructure, suggested timings and the potential for further savings.

Resolved

122.1 That in the interests of the efficiency of the service, the Director for Environment's offer to retire, with effect from the end of December 2013, be agreed.

122.2 That the Deputy Director for Environment be asked to act as Director, and that the Head of Property Services role be combined with the Countryside Head of Service role, pending full restructure proposals, and for a period of not more than six months, be approved.

122.3 That arrangements be made for the appropriate permanent replacement no later than 1 June 2014.