



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Monday, 5 September 2016

Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)

Peter Finney, Trevor Jones, Andrew Cattaway, Mike Lovell and David Mannings

Members Attending

Paul Kimber, County Councillor for Portland Tophill.

Officers Attending: Sara Collinson (HR & OD Business Partner), Alison Crockett (Service Manager OD and Engagement), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Note: 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 **Thursday, 24 November 2016**.)

Apologies for Absence

48 An apology for absence was received from Peter Richardson.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

50 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Matter Arising

Minute 46 – Officer Pay, Terms and Conditions- Cllr Jones as the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board advised members of the Staffing Committee that the Board had decided that this area needed to be reflected on, in terms of lessons learned, and that this be passed to the Staffing Committee for scrutiny. The Service Manager for OD and Engagement noted that this was in hand and further details would be brought to members at their meeting in November.

Public Participation

51 Public Speaking

There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

There were no petitions received at the meeting in accordance with the County Council's Petition Scheme.

Head Count and FTE and Non-Directly Employed Workforce - Quarter 1 2016/17

52 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which highlighted the continuing reduction in directly employed staff with a reduction of more than 1,000FTE since June 2010. The Council's annual spend on direct employees in

2015/16 was £132.9m (including on costs such as national insurance) and this was a reduction of £19m compared to 2014/15. The spend on agency staff was £1.6m in Quarter 1 2016/17 and the spend on consultancy fees, in the same quarter, was £485k.

The HR and OD Business Partner updated members on the staff numbers for each of the directorates. It was noted that Children's Services was still carrying more than 30 social work vacancies. She highlighted that in Adult and Community Services there could be a slight increase in agency spend as the directorate was looking to put in some more temporary resource.

The Chairman felt that the new format of report was more concise and clearly presented.

The Vice Chairman also suggested the inclusion of more line diagrams to give more of a holistic picture would be helpful.

Noted

Management of Attendance 2016/17 - Quarter 1

53 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) which outlined the County Council's initiative to provide more proactive and insightful sickness intelligence reporting for managers following the second successive increase in sickness absence, following four successive quarterly reductions.

The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted that the report showed increases in 5 out of 7 of the directorates and that the total number of sickness days now equated to 8.76 days per FTE.

The Vice-Chairman noted a slight increase in mental health related absence since the last quarter. The HR and OD Business Partner commented that staff were encouraged to be more open about mental health in order to receive the support they needed.

It was noted that the comparator information for age groups in the wider economy was dated (2010) and that wide ranging data was not updated on an annual basis.

The HR and OD Business Partner advised members that sickness reports were being designed to provide individual alerts to team managers as to when an action was required in relation to an individual. In addition return to work forms had been made easier for managers to complete. HR understood that managers were having to do more and were trying to make it as easy as possible to manage sickness in their teams.

The Chairman remarked that the increase in the County Council's sickness rate was disappointing, when members thought progress was being made. He agreed there was no evidence to show having an ageing workforce was a contributory cause. He highlighted the noticeable increase in the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) absence and suggested whether it would be helpful to have some comparative information from other authorities with similar manual working profiles. It was noted that training was key to managing musculoskeletal issues and officers were asked to check this was being offered and taken up within the DWP.

The Chairman requested an invite be sent to the Director of the DWP to the next Staffing Committee meeting in November to answer any further questions members may have.

One member made reference to an authority which had a different model for managing attendance, they had set up a dedicated line with medical information to act as a triage system. He noted that whilst this might not be an appropriate time to look at this now it might be worth considering in conjunction with the setting up of a new unitary authority. The Service Manager for OD and Engagement advised members that in the past this had been tried but it had not been used broadly across the authority. The member also felt it would be helpful to turn the sickness figures into a monetary value to show clearly what sickness costed, in the context of designing management attendance in a new authority.

Following a comment from a member regarding the long waiting times for medical appointments in some areas and if this affected the authority, the Service Manager for OD and Engagement had not heard anything from Occupational Health staff in this regard but highlighted the overall link to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) if this did appear to be an issue.

Resolved

That the Director for the DWP be invited to the Staffing Committee meeting scheduled for 24 November 2016.

Apprentices

54 Members received a presentation on Apprenticeships in the Public Sector.

The Learning and OD Lead advised members of the significant changes coming forward for the arrangement for apprentices with effect from 6 April 2017. The Public Sector Duty for recruitment of Apprentices was highlighted as 2.3% of workforce which equated to 109 apprentices (excluding schools). The Apprenticeship Levy would be 0.5% of pay bill which was estimated at £475k for the County Council. Levy funding could only be used for Apprenticeship training.

The length of apprenticeships would vary and could range from up to a year for a level 2 and 18 months to 2 years for a level 3 apprentice. Higher level apprenticeships would be available in areas such as legal and engineering which would be longer term placements. All apprenticeships would require formal training involving release from the workplace. She also confirmed there was no maximum age for apprentices.

The new apprenticeships would be very different from existing arrangements and in order to benefit fully from the levy money a different approach would be required. Officers undertook to report back to the Staffing Committee in November 2016 with proposals, and highlighted that this would form part of the council's workforce planning strategy and could be used to upskill current staff.

Following a comment from a member about recruiting looked after children the Service Manager for OD and Engagement advised that this was an area that had been looked into and would be part of proposals in the November report.

In response to a question from a member regarding a councillor being appointed to look after the apprentices, the Service Manager for OD and Engagement advised that work was already on going with Cllr Deborah Croney as the Cabinet member for Learning and Skills.

Resolved

That an update report be considered by the Committee in November 2016.

Redundancy Costs - Quarterly Report

55 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which considered the costs for redundancy dismissals effective from 1 April to 30 June 2016. Costs relating

to individual redundancies were now approved by the Director following the disbandment of the Personnel Appeals Committee.

The Service Manager for OD and Engagement highlighted the costs associated with the redundancy dismissals for the first quarter of the financial year and advised that there were no exceptional cases to report for the period April to June 2016.

Resolved

1. That the costs reported be noted.
2. That the inclusion of additional wording to the redundancy procedure as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the Chief Executive's report be noted.

Reason for decisions

To ensure the effective management and appropriate scrutiny of redundancy costs within the organisation.

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 11.25 am