



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Tuesday, 22 November 2016

Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)

Peter Finney, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Peter Richardson and Mark Tewkesbury

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer), Sheralyn Huntingford (Head of HR and Organisational Development), Natalie Adam (HR and OD Service Manager), Sara Collinson (HR & OD Business Partner), Alison Crockett (Service Manager OD and Engagement), Kirsty Hillier (Senior Communications Officer (internal)), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner), Karyn Punchard (Director of DWP), Helen Sotheran (Learning and Organisational Development Lead) and Fiona King (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 **Monday, 30 January 2017**.

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

Apologies for Absence

57 Apologies for absence were received from Trevor Jones and Andrew Cattaway.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

59 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

60 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.

Headcount and FTE Figures and Non-Directly Employed Contract Workforce - Quarter 2 2016/17

61 Members considered a report by the Chief Executive which highlighted that the Council had seen a continuing reduction in directly employed staff with a reduction of 1,450.74 FTE (excluding schools) since June 2010 which represented a 31% reduction. It was noted that the annual spend, in 2015/16, was £105.0M on direct employees.

Members' attention was drawn to the infographic, at appendix 1 of the Chief Executive's report, which illustrated headcount (full time equivalents) and spend on

agency and consultancy workers within different directorates over the past year. Overall spend on agency staff in Quarter 2 had been £2,09M which was an increase when compared to Quarter 1 2016/17. The areas of greatest spend on agency staff remained in Dorset Waste Partnership and Children's Services to meet operational needs and to cover vacancies.

With regards to consultancy fees, in Quarter 2 these had been £569.2k. The areas of greatest spend in this area was within the Directorate for the Economy and Environment and the Chief Executives Department.

Members felt the infographic was helpful and would be easier for members of the public to understand.

Following a concern from a member about the about of money being spent on agency staff the Chairman advised that the Staffing Committee closely monitored all agency and consultancy staff. The Head of HR and OD added there was a lot of scrutiny of this area at Director level. She continued that agency workers were sometimes used to buy in specific skills or as part of a planned restructure to try and reduce redundancy costs. They were also used to cover operationally important vacancies for example agency workers were currently being used in response to a shortage of social workers in Children's Services. The Monitoring Officer advised members that the Corporate Leadership Team had recently reported that as a result of a national campaign there were 18 people due to be interviewed shortly for social worker posts in Children's Services.

In response to a question about the payment per hour for agency workers, the HR and OD Business Partner advised they were usually paid on the DCC payscale but there would be an additional cost from the supplier which should be balanced with fewer costs associated with direct employment (e.g. pension). The situation may vary depending on the type of role. The Director for DWP highlighted that agency staff in the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) were slightly cheaper to employ than permanent staff but accepted it was very marginal.

The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted to members the 'manager's performance dashboard' which was available through the Sharepoint intranet to all managers. She explained that the data was pulled from the system in real time but was reliant on manager's inputting information such as sickness absences into the system.

Noted

Management of Attendance 2016/17 - Quarter 2

62 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) which described a mixed performance in relation to the achievement of sickness absence reductions, but highlighted that the current sickness rate now stood at 2% higher than last year's levels.

Members were presented with alternatives as to how they wished sickness absence to be reported to them in the future.

In many areas of the County Council sickness was being managed well but the overall aim was to get consistency and to get underneath the trends for sickness management. The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted the good performance that was being achieved in some areas. He highlighted the use of manager dashboard figures in future reports as this excluded leavers sickness figures in the future. He suggested that it might be helpful for future reporting to highlight an area of sickness and invite the specific manager to report directory to the Committee.

Following a concern from a member about burdening managers with an additional task, the HR and OD Manager advised that the job for managers had changed and that sickness management was now core to their job and it would only require them to submit a written explanation for submission to the Committee to ensure proper accountability for this expenditure.

Cllr Finney, as Mental Health Champion, expressed an interest in the number of people who attended the courses that were being offered in relation to stress or mental health conditions. Officers undertook to provide this information outside of the meeting.

One member suggested the courses be mandatory to ensure that the right people attended. The HR and OD Business Partner welcomed this initiative but advised that in the past unless courses were statutory they had not as a matter of course been mandatory. Officers were working hard to remove the stigma around mental health, it was improving but there were still pockets of it around the Authority. There was more work to be done in respect of course places available but he undertook to come back with further proposals for consideration.

Noted

Sickness Monitoring in the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP)

63 Karyn Purnard, Director of DWP gave a presentation on the management of sickness in DWP. A new absence management policy was introduced in 2015 which had been effective in tackling short term absence although long term sickness had increased. Comparative data had been collected from other authorities and showed similar figures. The Director highlighted the main reasons for sickness which included ear, nose and throat and digestive issues. The pattern changed for long term sickness with more musculoskeletal issues.

In the presentation the Director highlighted a day in the life of a loader for DWP and included the range of training that was offered to staff. The DWP sickness and reporting and monitoring procedure was highlighted to members as a help to support supervisors in the management of absences. Officers worked closely with the health and safety team and also referred cases to the Occupational Health team if appropriate. A list of DWP behaviours was highlighted, which had been compiled by staff and showed examples of good and bad behaviour.

The Director advised members that £100k on agency staff had been saved last year whilst recognising that long term sickness did cost a lot of money.

The Chairman thanked the Director for her presentation and highlighted to members the difficulty of several partner organisations joining together.

Noted

Redundancy Costs - Quarterly Report

64 Members received a report by the Chief Executive which considered the costs for redundancy dismissals effective from 1 July to 30 September 2016.

The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted the large number of redundancies during August 2016 for Children's Services and advised that a large number of these were in relation to youth worker positions.

Members were advised that there were no exceptionally large costs during this period and noted that the average payback period was 8 months.

One member commented that it was a clear and detailed report and was pleased to

see that Directors gave the right level of scrutiny to this.

Noted

Social Networking Policy

65 Members considered a report by the Chief Executive which reviewed the County Council's social networking policy following its initial implementation in 2010. The aim was to make changes to policy to reflect the introduction of 'Sharepoint' intranet.

The report highlighted the key points that employees needed to be aware of when accessing technology. Members were advised that Trade Unions had been consulted with and this policy linked closely with other policy documents.

Resolved

That the revised social networking policy, to take effect from 1 January 2017, be approved.

Reason for Decision

The Staffing Committee monitored matters relating to staff terms and conditions and people management policies.

Review of the Staff Code of Conduct

66 Members considered a report by the Chief Executive which aimed to ensure that the Staff Code of Conduct was up to date, included current key messages and was useful for managers and staff.

The Monitoring Officer explained that this had been a joint piece of work between HR and Democratic Services. In order to strengthen the Staff Code of Conduct and make it easier for staff to find and understand, the recommendation was for it to belong to the Staffing Committee and to then seek approval for it from the County Council.

RECOMMENDED

1. That the County Council, via the Audit and Governance Committee, be asked to approve the Staff Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 1 of the Chief Executive's report.
2. That the County Council, via the Audit and Governance Committee, be asked to agree to the publishing of the Staff Code of Conduct on Sharepoint and not within the Constitution.
3. That future delegation of significant changes to the Staff Code of Conduct be given to the Staffing Committee within its Terms of Reference.

Reason for recommendations

The Staffing Committee monitored matters relating to staff terms and conditions and people management policies.

Apprenticeships update

67 Members received a presentation from the Learning and Organisational Development (L&OD) Lead Officer on Apprenticeship Reforms 2016. She outlined that more information had now been received from the Government.

The draft options for the County Council apprenticeship scheme were shared with members. The final proposal would be presented to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting on 30 January 2017.

In respect of the levy it was now known that for the County Council (excluding schools) it would be £453,795 and would go up and down in line with HMRC returns. The levy including schools (maintained schools only) would be £913,488.

There were currently 37 apprentices, in the future to meet our Public Sector Duty of 2.3% of the workforce to be employed as Apprentices we would need a minimum of 203. It was important to note that for all apprentices 20% of their time would be 'off the job training'.

The L&OD Lead Officer highlighted the three strands of apprenticeships and one member commented that the route to universal employment could link in to the council's looked after children programme.

Following a question from a member about social responsibility, the L&OD Lead Officer explained that there was a pre-apprenticeship Traineeship, which was a 12 week programme. On completion of a traineeship there was no guarantee of an apprenticeship or permanent employment. Members felt there could be some confusion over the use of the work apprenticeship in this regard. The L&OD Lead Officer explained that traineeships tended to be driven by schools and colleges but when apprentices joined Dorset County Council they became the County Council's responsibility.

Currently Directorate Management Teams within the County Council were being asked to consider the type of posts that could be filled by apprentices.

Noted

Statutory Officer Panel Terms of Reference (Disciplinary Investigation Process for the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers)

68 (Note: The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer were not present for this item.)

Members considered a report by the Head of Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) which outlined the current process and arrangements for dismissal of the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers and highlighted the statutory underpinning of the procedure currently in place, which included seeking the advice of an independent panel.

The HR and OD Service Manager advised members that the proposal was to align with the model procedure which had now been incorporated into the Chief Executive Officers terms and conditions handbook by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) whereby elected members would no longer sit on the Independent Panel. The other elements of the DCC procedure would remain unchanged; the Staffing Committee would sit as a hearing panel, it would then pass to an independent panel for a view and the final decision to dismiss would be made by the full County Council.

One member felt further information was needed on this proposal. He felt the report did not identify exactly how the progression of evidence was gathered and did not see the necessity for the change. He highlighted areas where he felt more detail was needed and suggested that the Audit and Governance Committee also had sight of this proposed change. He was concerned there were too many assumptions and opinions made with a lack of evidence trail and felt the report should be deferred to allow for further additions and concerns.

The Chairman felt it was important to add that the Independent Panel was just one part of the process and was not about removing elected members from the process. This represented a very small change to the process and was being made to ensure the County Council was in line with the recommendations of the JNC and confirmed that the fundamental process had not changed. It was important to note that ultimately all decisions would be made by elected members.

The Vice Chairman felt the changes gave strength to any Chief Executive who found they were being pursued politically to remove them from post.

One member suggested it would be helpful to have the advice from the JNC appended to the report when it was presented to the full Council.

On being put to the vote Cllr Peter Richardson requested that his vote against the proposal be recorded. He added that he did not feel the Independent Panel would be improved by the exclusion of elected members.

Resolved

That the advice from the JNC be appended to the report in readiness for County Council.

RECOMMENDED

That the County Council, following the Audit and Governance Committee meeting, be asked to approve the terms of reference for the Statutory Officer Panel so that the Panel comprised independent persons only.

Reason for recommendation

The Staffing Committee would deal with issues relating to disciplinary action or capability in respect of the Chief Executive, Directors, Statutory Officers and Heads of Service. In light of the recommendation independent persons would play an advisory roles but any decision to dismiss would still be one for the County Council.

Senior Officer Pay, Terms and Conditions - Lessons Learned

69 Members considered a report by the Chief Executive which advised members of a lessons learned exercise that had taken place following the review of senior officer pay, terms and conditions. The overall findings showed that the review was conducted professionally with a focus on transparency, consistency of approach/application and with independent external advice and support provided throughout.

The Chief Executive highlighted the key points of the review which included understanding the rationale, the resource allocation and the impact of the review on the County Council. She noted that the communication of the whole process had been open and had been followed through with the trade unions, but recognised that with hindsight a few things could have been done differently.

The Chairman commented that this review had been given a lot of consideration at Staffing Committee meetings. One member noted the importance of all posts, top to bottom, being job evaluated and that there was now consistency.

The Chief Executive advised members that the implementation of the review had in fact cost less than had been anticipated.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

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

Exempt Business

71 **Resolved**

That in accordance with Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting in relation to the business specified in minute 72 as it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 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.

Review of Terms and Conditions

72 Members considered an exempt report by the Chief Executive which aimed to provide members with a high level update on the work undertaken as part of this review since the last report to this Committee in March 2016.

The Head of HR and OD explained that the scope of the review had changed and now focussed on the modernisation of the Council's employment policies and practices. She reported that the trade unions had requested further time to talk with their members prior to responding to the proposals. Agreeing to such a request would require members to consider agreeing to postpone any decision on proposed change until their meeting in January 2017 and agree a temporary extension to the expiry date of the current redundancy multiplier.

Resolved

1. That a final package of changes be presented back to this Committee in January 2017 for a final decision, with implementation from 1 April 2017 at the earliest.
2. That a temporary extension of the current redundancy pay multiplier which is 1.75 times the statutory redundancy pay formula based on actual pay (due to end 31 December 216) until 31 March 2017 be agreed.

Reason for decisions

To enable the modernisation of employment policies and practices review to continue.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.15 pm