



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Monday, 30 January 2017

Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)
Trevor Jones, Mike Lovell and David Mannings

Officers Attending: Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer), Sheralyn Huntingford (Head of HR and Organisational Development), Alison Crockett (Service Manager OD and Engagement), Natalie Adam (HR and OD Service Manager), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner), 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, 10 April 2017**.

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

Apologies for Absence

1 Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Cattaway, Peter Richardson, and Peter Finney.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

3 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2016 were confirmed and signed.

Following a comment from a member about the Christmas and New Year opening of County Hall, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Corporate Leadership Team had hoped to close the whole building but on investigation it was found that certain areas such as the traffic control section needed to remain open. Therefore, only strictly controlled areas of the building were open. In respect of staff being required to take leave the Head of HR and Organisational Development advised that this would require a contractual change which had been discussed at a meeting of the Corporate Leadership Team where the Chief Executive and Directors noted that Dorset County Council needed to provide cover all year round.

It was felt this should be kept under review to maximise efficiency at this particular time of year.

Public Participation

4 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.

Apprentice Scheme from April 2017

- 5 The Committee considered a report from the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which outlined the Apprenticeship reforms and what they meant for Dorset County Council.

The Learning and Organisational Development (OD) Lead Officer outlined scheme proposals for members and highlighted the three main strands.

In respect of the third strand, work experience and traineeships, one member felt this should be carried out by schools. The Learning and OD Lead Officer advised that the purpose of this strand was to support young people in being 'Apprenticeship ready' and this involved joint working with schools and colleges.

Following a question about timescales, officers advised that the Government would be looking for demonstrations to show that the County Council was working within the spirit of this legislation along with reporting annually on progress towards targets.

Reference was made to helping looked after children and officers reported that work was ongoing with these children to ensure they were 'work ready' and already any looked after child was guaranteed an interview with the Authority. One member expressed concern that the County Council should be offering looked after children more of an opportunity to work for the Authority. The Service Manager for OD and Engagement noted the importance of recognising that this route might not be the personal choice of young people and the purpose of the three strands was to make these opportunities available for looked after children and work was ongoing with Children's Services in this regard.

The Chairman felt it would be helpful for members to have continuous updates on the progress of this scheme.

Resolved

1. That the proposed scheme for implementation from April 2017 be approved.
2. An update on the progress of the scheme be presented to the Staffing Committee in 6 months' time.

Reason for Decisions

To ensure that the Council complied with the new Apprenticeship legislation while deriving optimum benefit from the required changes.

Violence, Aggression and Harassment at Work Policy

- 6 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which summarised the key changes and anticipated improvements to the Policy.

The Service Manager for OD and Engagement advised members that this policy was last reviewed in 2007 and the purpose was to provide greater clarity in this area and to manage and minimise any risk to the County Council's workforce.

Resolved

That the revised Violence, Aggression and Harassment at Work Policy be approved and be effective from 1 April 2017.

Reason for Decision

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

Revision to Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy

7 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which sought approval to introduce testing for alcohol, drugs or misuse of substances in specific circumstances.

The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted the safety critical roles where random testing would be appropriate and advised that officers in HR and OD would continue to consult with the Trade Unions on the arrangements for implementation. It was noted that the County Council would only work with accredited organisations in respect of testing.

Following a question from a member regarding timescales, the HR and OD Business Partner advised that discussions had started with Trade Unions who were very supportive of this work. This was just the start of the consultation process, the revised up to date policy and post implementation review would be presented to the Staffing Committee when the consultation period had ended.

Members' attention was drawn to the estimated costs for this work but the final costs would depend on the type and number of tests undertaken and would be met by the relevant Directorate.

Resolved

1. That the introduction of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse testing, subject to the completion of the Trade Union consultation and following professional advice, be approved.
2. That a revised alcohol and substance misuse policy be brought to this Committee for approval.
3. That a review paper be brought to Staffing Committee 12 months post implementation.

Reason for Decision

To promote a healthy and safe working environment and to protect the public from harm.

PDR: Completion Rates and Quality of PDR Survey

8 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which analysed the trend in Performance and Development Review (PDR) completion for the last 2 years and considered the learning and insights from areas of good practice.

The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted the areas with the highest and lowest rates of PDR completion and the learning points in high response areas were noted. The quality of PDRs would continue to be monitored following receipt of over 400 responses to a recent questionnaire which had been sent to all staff.

Following a question from a member regarding whether any benchmarking work with other authorities had been carried out in respect of the monitoring of PDRs, the HR and OD Business Partner advised that following research online and with a range of organisations he had been unable to find another organisation who carried out such monitoring.

It was felt there needed to be a focus on some of the lower response areas but noted it was encouraging to see some of the quality of the PDRs.

Following a comment from a member about the low number of responses for Children's Services and the reasons for this, the HR and OD Business Partner advised there were particular problems in this area regarding agency workers and

heavy caseloads. The Service Manager for OD and Engagement advised that she had recently attended a Directorate Management Team meeting at Children's Services where there was a real focus on the delivery targets for PDR completion.

One member suggested inviting the Director or appropriate senior manager in her team to the next meeting to discuss completion of PDRs further.

Resolved

That the Director/Senior Manager from Children's Services be invited to the next meeting of the Staffing Committee in which PDRs would be tabled for review.

Pay Policy Statement 2017/18

9 The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive which included the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 and also provided information about gender pay gap reporting which the Council was likely to have to provide during the 2017/18 financial year and annually thereafter.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services highlighted to members that this statement was now an embedded part of what the County Council now did in demonstrating transparency around pay. It covered not just senior officers pay but also the relationship between the highest and lowest pay.

The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted the main changes in the proposed pay policy statement from the previous year which focussed on the pay multiples, both of which had either reduced or remained unchanged. She explained that the appendices showed Chief Officer information for both Council funded and joint partner funded roles including consultants/interims.

One member highlighted the pay multiples from previous years in the report and felt this was a good news story as the gap between highest paid (Chief Officers) and lowest paid (non Chief Officers) had narrowed year on year since the pay policy statements had first been published.

Cllr Trevor Jones, as the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, advised members of the work his committee was undertaking in conjunction with Internal Audit in relation to agency staff not being managed robustly and controls not being effective.

It was highlighted the key issue was that the consultant/interim post costs were all within salary budgets for those specific posts. It was also noted that there was a defined period of time stated for how long individuals would be required which allowed for flexibility for future arrangements. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services made reference to one specific post and highlighted that this was funded from a Government grant.

RECOMMENDED

That the County Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.

Reason for Recommendation

The Staffing Committee oversees matters relating to staff terms and conditions.

Redundancy Costs - Quarterly Report

10 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which considered the costs for redundancy dismissals effective from 1 October to 31 December 2016.

The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted one stand out payment with a 32 month

payback following a review in the accountancy service. The Director in this instance had looked at not just the individual case but the pay-back period for the whole review which was 10.5 months. There were no exceptionally high packages to report for this period.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

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

Exempt Business

12 **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 minutes 85 to 87 as it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3,4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Adoption Leave: Review of Approach to Pay

13 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which provided members with a summary of the current approach in respect of adoption leave and considered a number of potential options for the future.

Following a discussion around these options, members asked for a further report to provide further clarification prior to a decision being reached.

Resolved

That the decision be deferred to the next meeting.

Reasons for Decision

1. The Staffing Committee oversees matters relating to staff terms and conditions.
2. Any change to terms and conditions were considered alongside the wider review to modernise employment policies and practices in order to provide a consistent message.

Retention of Social Workers

14 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which identified a specific issue which when resolved would address some retention concerns in Children's Services.

In response to a question from a member about staff leaving the County Council to work in other authorities for higher pay, the HR and OD Service Manager confirmed that this was happening.

The Committee was keen to understand the implications for the current overspend in Children's Services before reaching a decision.

The Head of HR and OD advised members of a similar issue in Adult and Community Services but more work was still needed in this regard.

Resolved

1. That the recommendation in respect of Children's Services be approved.
2. That the decision on the same matter within Adult and Community Services be delegated to the Head of Organisational Development in consultation with the Leader, based on a clear evidential case.

Reason for Decisions

The Staffing Committee's remit in respect of staff terms and condition and employment policies.

Modernisation of Employment Policies and Practices (MEPP)

- 15 The Committee considered an exempt report from the Chief Executive which provided members with further detail of the proposed package of changes and took account of the cost benefits, feedback from the Trade Unions, managers and staff, discussions around the future of councils in Dorset, and the business impacts associated with any changes.

The Head of HR and OD explained each section of the report and members asked questions to clarify their understanding of the proposals before reaching a decision.

Resolved

1. That the final package of changes to policies and practices for implementation from April 2017 onwards be approved.
2. That the extension of time for consideration of further aspects of the review at the Staffing Committee meeting on 10 April 2017 be approved.
3. That Dorset Schools (where the Council was the employer) governing bodies be recommended to adopt the relevant policy and practice changes.
4. That TUPE protected staff retained their transfer protections unless council policies and practices were applicable.

Reason for Decisions

To enable the modernisation of employment policies and practices which in turn will secure some financial savings for the Council.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm