



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Monday, 10 April 2017

Present:

Robert Gould (Chairman)
Peter Finney, Trevor Jones, David Mannings and Andrew Parry

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational Development - Monitoring Officer), Sheralyn Huntingford (Head of HR and Organisational Development), Natalie Adam (HR and OD Service Manager), Sara Collinson (HR & OD Business Partner), Vanessa Glenn (Assistant Director for Care and Protection), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner), Fiona E King (Communications Officer), Patrick Myers (Assistant Director - Design and Development), Rick Perry (Senior Manager for Change Management and Planning) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Notes: 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 July 2017**.)

Apologies for Absence

16 Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Cattaway and Peter Richardson.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

18 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Public Participation

19 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.

Management of Attendance 2016/17 - Quarter 3

20 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which highlighted a mixed set of sickness results for Quarter 3 to December 2016 as absence rates remained relatively unchanged at 8.79 days per FTE.

Members were advised that the data used in future reports on the management of attendance would be gathered from the new Management Dashboard data which would exclude data from those employees who had left the Authority in the last twelve months.

The HR and OD Business Partner drew members' attention to the new Health and Wellbeing intranet site which hosted a range of materials, including videos and training which would be particularly helpful for people with mental health issues. Following a question from the Vice-Chairman about the number of 'hits' on the get active elements of the new Health and Wellbeing site, the HR and OD Business Partner undertook to provide this information outside of the meeting.

The case study focus was a report on Dorset Passenger Transport which had sickness levels of 13.62 days and the plans to resolve this were highlighted. The HR and OD Business Partner undertook to update members at a future meeting on the progress of the implementation of the proposed changes.

Following a discussion about sickness rates for Passenger Transport Assistants, one member queried if there was anything proactive that could be changed in their working arrangements to try to improve this absenteeism e.g. vehicle design. The HR and OD Business Partner undertook to look into this and report back. He added that some of the older workforce struggled with restraining those children who tried to get out of the vehicle. This had highlighted the need for a reasonable test of people's fitness at the application stage. One member suggested that a series of exercises, e.g. Pilates, for people in certain roles could be helpful.

In response to a question from the Chief Executive about the new style of reporting, members felt it seemed much improved and more relevant and gave them a better insight into what was going on in respect of attendance within the organisation.

One member noted that as part of his recent induction he had requested to meet with the Manager of Dorset Direct and felt it would be really helpful for other members to see them in action in order to understand the range of issues that came through Dorset Direct. Reference was also made to buddying/shadowing system for members where they spent time with a professional which had proved to be very useful.

Resolved

1. That the learning from Dorset Direct be communicated widely to all DCC managers as a case study to assist other services in managing sickness.
2. That Dorset Passenger Transport produces a follow up report to the Staffing Committee, to include the new system for reporting PA absence and managing return to work interviews.
3. That a representative from Adult and Community Services attend to update members of the Staffing Committee at their next meeting on 10 July 2017. Finance and Governance and Assurance Services be also asked to produce a written commentary on their high absence levels including their proposals to resolve.

Reason for Decisions

To ensure the effective management of attendance within the Authority.

Sickness Monitoring in the Children's Services Directorate

21 The Assistant Director for Care and Protection in Children's Services attended to update members on their current sickness levels.

She highlighted the historical aspect and recent structure changes within the service. The Care and Protection service were currently seeing a decline in sickness levels. She advised that there were currently 47 agency social workers but by the end of May there would be just 26. All team manager posts had also now been recruited to.

From September to March 2017 the headcount figure in Children's Services was 483. During this period there were 3512 sickness days lost and the Assistant Director gave members a breakdown of the different service areas highlighting that Care and

Support accounted for 14.92%.

Following a question from the Vice-Chairman about rates of pay for social workers in the age 0-12 service, the Assistant Director advised that it was the same as for other social workers. She added that the authority was now beginning to attract more social workers as a result of a number of initiatives that had been undertaken recently.

In response to a question from a member about the safeguards taken to ensure social workers were not overworked again, the Assistant Director advised that all social workers now received formal supervision and they all had a support plan in place around their development. In respect of stress related issues officers were actively seeking ways to offer more support by doing things differently in a safe and supported way. She added that all social workers undertook continuing professional development.

Following a question from a member about what had been done to bring about a change in social workers wanting to work for Dorset, the Assistant Director advised that a recruitment day had been held and that the profile of the County Council was now higher nationally than it was before. They had recently had a successful innovation bid with the Department for Education (DfE). Training and development that was now offered was focussed on improving outcomes for the social workers and for Dorset Children. The Chief Executive added that employees were starting to feel better supported in these areas and officers were now seeing the benefit of work that started some 18 months ago.

One member asked if staff, who were off sick, were encouraged to return to work early and perhaps perform different duties. The Assistant Director advised that there had to be a balanced approach and that it depended on the role of the individual. She added that a flexible approach was taken when supporting employees to return to work, including reasonable adjustments and working with the Occupational Health team.

In response to a question regarding relations with the local media, the Assistant Director advised that there had been a number of challenges in this regard but there were good communications in place to try and develop contact with the local media.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Director for her helpful and interesting presentation.

Noted

Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) - update from Children's Services

22 The Assistant Director for Design and Development from Children's Services and the Service Manager for Change Management and Planning, attended to highlight to members the specific problems with the completion of PDRs in certain areas of their service.

The Service Manager for Change Management and Planning assured members that PDRs were taken very seriously and he highlighted the work that had been undertaken to try and improve the PDR statistics.

He highlighted the major restructure that had taken place in Children's Services last year and that at the time of PDRs many staff were post preferencing and therefore targets had not at the time been set. This year teams were established and there was a clear sense of direction. To date 53% of staff had so far completed their PDRs with three weeks still to go before the deadline. The quality of PDRs had also been taken into account. HR and OD Business Partner advised members that the PDR process

for managers was now a much simpler and shorter process and the recent survey on the quality of PDRs had been very reassuring. The aim was to continue the survey at the end of the year to ensure this was continued.

The Assistant Director highlighted that learning points from this process included the importance of keeping up business as usual during periods of transformation. Dashboard information was proving very useful and periodically targets were looked at throughout the year rather than wait for mid-year reviews. Where areas of inconsistency had been found they were being addressed.

Following a question from a member about the consequences for managers that hadn't delivered their PDRs on time, the Assistant Director advised there were routes that could be taken to help people understand what their responsibilities were. He undertook to report back to members after the mid-year review for completeness.

Resolved

That members of the Staffing Committee receive an update following the mid-year period.

Headcount and FTE Figures and Non-Directly Employed Contract Workforce - Quarter 3 2016/17

- 23 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which highlighted the flexible approach taken to ensure that the people with the right skills were in the right place at the right time to deliver services effectively.

Members were advised on the continuing reduction in directly employed staff with a reduction of 1,446.72FTE (excluding schools) since June 2010. This included 743.5 FTE transferred to Tricuro in July 2015.

Whilst there had been a decrease in the agency spend overall within the County Council since Quarter 2 and a decrease in spend on consultancy fees across the Council for the same period, the overall spend for agency staff for Quarter 3 was £1.85m. The amount spent on consultants for the same period was £413,000, with the greatest spend being in the Environment and Economy Directorate and Children's Services.

Noted

Equality and Diversity Policy

- 24 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which reviewed the Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure it reflected the council's commitment to equality and diversity in a modern workplace.

Resolved

That the revised Policy be approved to take effect from 1 May 2017.

Reason for Decision

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

Redundancy Costs - Quarterly Report

- 25 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which highlighted the costs for redundancy dismissals effective from 1 January to 31 March 2017.

In response to a question from a member about the regulations in respect of Exit payments, the HR and OD Service Manager advised there was no further information available at present and officers were awaiting detailed guidance.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

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

Exempt Business

27 **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 28 to 30 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 1,2, 4 and 5 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.

Pay for Adoption Leave

28 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development which provided further detail in relation to benefits and risks of the different options available to the Council.

The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted the close alignment with the maternity scheme and adoption leave. There was no provision proposed to provide any enhanced pay for shared parental leave at this stage.

Following a question from a member regarding foster carers, the HR and OD Service Manager advised that provision was not made in the legislation for foster carers but explained that other leave may be accessed for this purpose.

In relation to letters of support for employees experiencing a family bereavement, members understood this would now be undertaken. The Chief Executive added that it was timely to look at the courtesy of all of the authority's letters to employees in this situation.

Resolved

That the option to provide occupational adoption pay to mirror occupational maternity pay be approved.

Reason for Decision

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

Modernising Employment Policies (MEPP) Review

29 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Chief Executive which provided members with further details on the outstanding elements of the proposal which was considered by members at their meeting on 30 January 2017. The report also provided members with an update in respect of the previous decision to postpone an equal pay review.

In respect of the proposed changes to travel rules, one member felt that this should also be presented to the Staff Consultative Panel for information. The Chairman suggested that members approve this element of the proposals today and the outcomes be presented to the Staff Consultative Panel for information, following the detailed discussions that had already taken place with trade union representatives.

Following a comment from a member about budgetary issues relating to the travel changes, the HR and OD Service Manager explained that there would be some gains

and some losses but more importantly claims would be HMRC compliant.

Resolved

1. That the elements of the package of changes to policies and practices for implementation as set out at paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 of the Chief Executive's report be approved;
2. That a minimum reference salary for redundancy payments back dated to 1 April 2017 be introduced;
3. That pay be accredited first aiders based on need, phasing out the current approach and payments, from 10 April onwards and amending the payment level;
4. That the home to work travel rules from 1 August 2017 and provisions for home workers be updated;
5. That there be a moratorium on whole authority terms and conditions and pay changes until April 2019 unless legislative or extreme financial pressure dictates;
6. That the provision for trade union facilities to align with future needs be amended.
7. That for Dorset Schools (where the Council was the employer) governing bodies were recommended to adopt the relevant policy and practice changes and that TUPE protected staff would retain their transfer protections unless council policies and practices were applicable;
8. That the Equal Pay Review be postponed for 2 years.

Reason for Decisions

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

Senior Structures

30 (Note: The Monitoring Officer left the meeting for this item.)

The Committee considered an exempt report by the Chief Executive which asked members to agree to a number of changes to the existing senior management structure in order to provide a more flexible senior management resource.

The proposals aimed to align skills and resources to the council's Strategic Priorities and would provide the capacity needed to support effective change management.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the statutory roles for Children and Adult services would be held by one Director, subject to member approval. The Chief Executive confirmed that the IR35 change in responsibility had been properly considered in making the recommendations. The current Director for Children's Services would hold the Corporate Director role.

Following a question from a member about consultation with the persons concerned, the Chief Executive advised that this had been discussed with the Directors and their portfolio leads who were all in agreement with the changes. The Chief Executive proposed to report back to Staffing Committee at their meeting on 10 July 2017 following a review of the changes prior to a proposal being brought to a meeting of the County Council on 20 July 2017.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was no intention to regrade any posts as a result of this change. She explained that the review planned for June would be to ensure that the arrangements were working, prior to a final decision being made. One member felt it would be useful for members at their next meeting on 10 July 2017 to have a discussion to ensure there was enough managerial capacity following the changes. The Chairman confirmed the importance of ensuring there was proper capacity and more would be known in respect of LGR by June.

The Chief Executive highlighted the Programme Director roles and explained she was looking for a resource to bring in without them being formal Directors, and this resource would be shared with the Dorset Councils Partnership (DCP).

In response to a question from a member regarding agreements from the Districts/Boroughs, the Chief Executive confirmed this had been discussed with the Chief Executives and Leaders of the relevant authorities.

One member felt it would be useful to ask the Auditors to monitor the performance of the Authority in respect of any potential service failure as a result of less people.

Resolved

1. That the existing Director roles become Corporate Director roles with flexibility of portfolios of responsibility be agreed.
2. That the statutory roles for Children and Adult Services be held by one Director and Sara Tough become the Corporate Director for Children and Adult Services, be agreed, pending a review in June 2017.
3. That members agreed to the extended management responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer with the title of Head of Organisational Development.
4. That the deletion of the posts of Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications and Head of Corporate Development be agreed (all three posts held vacant and savings had been yielded).
5. That the use of short term appointments through appropriate formal procurement rules to support the essential transformation programmes around Health and Social Care and Business Transformation including Local Government Organisation, Medium Term Financial Plan and Sustainability and Transformation Plan be agreed. These to be designated as Programme Director roles with defined responsibility.
6. That members agreed to these changes taking immediate effect and being subject to review in June 2017. The outcome of the review to be reported to the Staffing Committee on 10 July 2017 and then to County Council on 20 July 2017. Members noted that once this had been recommended to the County Council the changes would be subject to Article 12 of the Council's Constitution, subject to the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Reason for Decisions

To facilitate the realisation of the County Council's Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and ambition within the available resources.

As this was the last Staffing Committee meeting for Cllr Trevor Jones, as he was not seeking re-election, the Chairman took the opportunity to thank him for all his contributions to the work of the Committee over a number of years.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm