



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Wednesday, 13 September 2017

Present:

Rebecca Knox (Chairman)
Hilary Cox, Janet Dover, Steven Lugg and Andrew Parry

Officers Attending: Natalie Adam (HR & OD Service Manager), Mike Bingham (ICT Business Partner), Sara Collinson (HR & OD Business Partner), Alison Crockett (Acting Specialist Services Lead), Kirsty Hillier (Senior Communications Officer (internal)), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational Development - Monitoring Officer) 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, 27 November 2017**).

Apologies for Absence

37 Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Cattaway and Andy Canning.

Code of Conduct

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

The Monitoring Officer advised members that whilst Councillor Lugg's wife was employed in Library Service he had a dispensation to speak and vote on staffing matters generally. However, if there were items specifically related to the Library Service or to Ferndown Library Councillor Lugg would withdraw from the meeting.

Minutes

39 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2017 were confirmed and signed.

Matters Arising

As this was the first meeting of the new Staffing Committee, the HR Specialist Services Lead officer updated members on the previous business of the committee including:-

Minute 20 – Management of Attendance – members were updated on the actions that had been taken arising from the meeting held on 10 April 2017. As a representative from Adult and Community Services had been unable to attend for this meeting the Chairman asked that their presentation be circulated to members outside of this meeting and for it not to wait until the November meeting.

Minute 22- Performance and Development Reviews – The HR Specialist Services Lead advised that a report would be presented to members when the midyear (August-October) reviews had been completed along with some deep dive information. The Chairman felt it would be helpful to be clear on a date when the report would be presented.

Minute 29 – Modernising Employment Policies (MEPP) Review - The HR Specialist Services Lead explained the background to recommendation 5 for the new members on the Committee.

Minute 30 - Senior Structures – Members were advised that events had now overtaken recommendation 2 as a result of the resignation of the Director for Children's and Adult and Community Services and discussions were ongoing

between the Chief Executive and Lead Members. The Chairman asked that this item be on the agenda for their next meeting on 27 November 2017.

Public Participation

40 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.

Terms of Reference and Role of the Staffing Committee

41 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development which gave members of the new Staffing Committee an opportunity to review its terms of reference.

Attention was drawn to the proposed terms of reference for the Staffing Committee which included a specific focus upon proactive workforce planning to ensure that the Council had the right people with the right skills and the correct balance between directly and non-directly employed staff.

Members felt this was a good opportunity for a fresh approach and welcomed this. In response to a question from a member about the 'White Book', the Head of Organisational Development advised that the majority of staff were employed on the Green Book terms and conditions of employment and that the White Book applied to the most senior managers in the Authority and contained slightly different terms and conditions.

One member highlighted the need to ensure that staff were happy and worked in a culture that supported that. He made reference to the 'soft' benefits that were offered to staff working in Dorchester but were not always offered elsewhere. The Vice-Chairman highlighted the reference to 'effective management' within the terms of reference and felt that this should cover morale, welfare and wellbeing. A presentation on the differences between employee terms and conditions such as the Green and White Books would be helpful for members at their meeting on 27 November 2017.

The Chairman made reference to some leaflets on values that she had recently had sight of which she felt needed to be updated. The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted the Behaviours document that sat alongside this and undertook to send a copy of both of them to members for their information and to also add it to the agenda for the November meeting.

Following a discussion about Staffing Committee meetings and Staff Consultative Panel meetings, the HR Specialist Services Lead felt that now would be a good opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the two forums.

Resolved

1. That the proposed new terms of reference be agreed.
2. That items for the 27 November 2017 meeting include a presentation on staff terms and conditions of employment and a discussion on the Values and Behaviours documents.

Reason for Decisions

To provide a focus for the work of the Committee, adopting terms of reference from

previous years and providing a focus upon workforce planning to meet the needs of the Council.

Headcount and FTE and Non-Directly Employed Contract Workforce - Quarter 1 2017/18

42 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development which highlighted the Council's flexible approach to ensuring it had people with the right skills and that operational needs were delivered using a combination of directly employed staff, casual workers, agency staff and specialist workers.

Members' attention was drawn to the continuing reduction in directly employed staff with a reduction of 1,452 full time equivalents (excluding schools) since June 2010.

The HR Business Partner reported that there had been a decrease in agency spend overall within the County Council since Quarter 4 (by £904k) and a decrease in spend on consultancy fees across the Council compared with the same period by £342k.

One member was pleased to note the mention of 'clear business rationale and monitoring' in relation to the use of Consultants or Specialist advisors.

Members felt it would be helpful to have a representative from Children's Services attend their next meeting on 27 November 2017 to update them on their agency staff usage.

Following a discussion about the headcount figures for the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP), the HR Business Partner highlighted that a significant part of the spending on agency staff for DWP was to cover sickness absence. Spending on other agency staff was reducing as they were replaced with permanent staff.

The Chairman felt that for future reports there needed to be more context and information and to include the direction of travel. In respect of Appendix 2, of the report, she felt it was difficult to understand and she would like to see an explanation for any movement in the figures included.

Resolved

1. That Directorates apply the following principles for reference in future reports to the Committee:-
 - Across all Directorates spend on direct employees, agency staff or external advisors/consultants should be funded by staffing budgets, income, fees or grants or specific funding approved on an invest to save basis.
 - Consultants or specialist advisors used to supply additional skills and advice to support project delivery or delivery of specific outcomes will be engaged in accordance with a clear business rationale/case. There should be monitoring of spend against performance delivery to ensure value for money and efficient use of resources.
 - That more richness in future reporting be included.
2. That a representative from Children's Services attend the next meeting on 27 November 2017 to discuss agency staff usage.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the Committee was kept apprised of changes in the number of staff employed by the County Council in the context of budget reductions and the Forward Together Programme and to ensure there was full transparency about the Council's use of direct and non-direct staff resources.

Management of Attendance 2017/18 - Quarter 1

43 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development which highlighted that sickness rates across the County Council remained relatively

unchanged over the last quarter.

Members were advised that the most significant falls in absence were in Adult Care from 9.51 to 8.54 days. Finance and Procurement had also achieved a significant fall in their sickness absence rates.

Following a question from a member regarding the number of staff taking advantage of mental health referrals, the HR Specialist Services Lead advised that currently it was quite a narrow offer that included a route into counselling which was not always the right level of support needed. Work was ongoing to develop a more sophisticated offer along with further work focussing on prevention. Data and information relating to counselling and the work on the wellbeing offer for the Council could be shared with members outside of the meeting.

In respect of the recommendation to request a review of the preventative measures that the County Council was adopting to minimise musculoskeletal related absences, one member asked why this was being highlighted rather than mental health related absences. The HR Specialist Services Lead advised that some targeted work on mental health was already underway in Children's Services and in other areas of the County Council. The Chairman felt that the subject of mental health was not as evident on the website as it could be and needed more prominence. She would also be interested to further understand the County Council's Occupational Health practices.

Resolved

That a review of the preventative measures Dorset County Council adopts to minimise musculoskeletal related absences be agreed.

Reason for Decision

To provide a focus for the effective management of attendance within the Council.

Sickness Monitoring in the Adult and Community Services Directorate

44 As a representative was unable to attend for this meeting, officers undertook to circulate the presentation from Adult and Community Services in respect of their sickness monitoring.

However, members received a demonstration of the new manager's sickness reporting system which had now been rolled out throughout the County Council.

The ICT Business Partner explained how the system worked and highlighted the analysis of sickness that managers were able to see for their teams which made scrutiny of the information easier for managers. In respect of confidentiality he confirmed that managers could only access their own teams' information.

Members were also shown the Manager's Performance Dashboard which showed statistics for the whole of the County Council. It was now very easy to drill into information for a specific employee as well as for teams. Work was ongoing to get staff turnover and vacancies into the dashboard.

Following a question from a member about training and support, the HR Specialist Services Lead explained there was a range of core provision available to managers to help them develop their skills and manage effectively.

Resolved

That the presentation from Adult and Community Services be circulated to members.

Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy

- 45 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development which updated members on advice and consultations that had taken place since the Staffing Committee meeting that was held in January 2017. The report also presented the revised policy for formal approval.

The Head of Organisational Development advised that at present officers were focussing on particular high risk groups. The Chairman asked about the procurement exercise around the testing, and the HR Specialist Services Lead undertook to email members with further information.

Following a question from a member about the availability of support and training to deal with employees with dependencies, the HR and OD Service Manager advised that these were dealt with on an individual basis through the Advisory Team. In respect of the roll-out of this policy specific training had been given.

Resolved

That the revised Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy be approved and to take effect from 1 November 2017.

Reason for Decision

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

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Employer Discretions

- 46 The Committee considered a report by the Head of Organisational Development which focussed on the council's approach to awarding enhanced pension benefit payments in flexible and early retirement cases to existing staff as a result of feedback from directorates relating to recent cases.

Resolved

That the implementation and publication of a revised statement of policy on or around 16 October 2017 be agreed.

Reason for Decision

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

Questions from County Councillors

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

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 11.50 am