



## Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,  
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Monday, 27 November 2017

**Present:**

Peter Wharf (Chairman)  
Ray Bryan, Andy Canning and Rebecca Knox

Officers Attending: Natalie Adam (HR & OD Service Manager), Alison Crockett (Acting Specialist Services Lead), Kirsty Hillier (Senior Communications Officer (internal)), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner), Jonathan Mair (Head of Organisational Development - Monitoring Officer) 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 **Monday, 29 January 2018.**)

### **Election of Chairman**

48 **Resolved**  
That Peter Wharf be elected to Chairman for the remainder of 2017/18.

Members were advised that the change in Chairmanship was as a result of a change in the Portfolio Holder for Workforce.

### **Apologies for Absence**

49 Apologies for absence were received from Hilary Cox and Janet Dover.

### **Code of Conduct**

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

The Chairman noted that Cllr Lugg had a general interest as his wife works as a part-time Library Assistant. Should any item arise that involved libraries he would be entitled to stay for any general conversations and voting in respect of staffing matters as he has a dispensation in place for this.

### **Minutes**

51 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2017 were confirmed and signed.

#### Matter Arising

Minute 45 – Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy – The Acting Specialist Services Lead provided a brief summary of the procurement process following a request to circulate information to members at the previous meeting.

### **Public Participation**

52 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 2017/18 - Quarter 2**

53 The Committee considered a report from the Head of Organisational Development which showed that overall absence levels within the County Council remained relatively unchanged. Members were updated on a few areas that had showed slight reductions in their levels of absence whilst there were slight increases in Organisational Development and Environment and Economy. The highest reasons for absence this quarter related to mental health and musculoskeletal problems.

As part of a discussion about sickness in Children's Services, members were advised that the quality of supervision and caseloads of social workers was being further reviewed by the new interim Director for Children's Services and that a bid would be coming forward for additional experienced social workers.

In respect of the high number of mental health cases in the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) it was noted that stress could be home related as well as work related. One member expressed an interest in seeing the details of the absences broken down into areas to see if this increase was as a result of a change in the way the workers' rounds were now organised.

The Chairman advised that there had been a call for interest amongst members to be a Mental Health Champion. The aim was to get a group of members to take on this role. There would be a need to develop an action plan of how officers could use members in this role. One member noted the importance of having a clear commitment and providing clarity about the time required for members taking on these roles.

In respect of Musculoskeletal absences, which were highest in the DWP, members were advised that early referrals to occupational health and other interventions were a focus and an update on this would be provided at a future meeting.

Following a discussion about possible causes of musculoskeletal issues in the DWP, one member stated that the DWP Joint Committee should have more oversight of the reasons for sickness. It was felt that the DWP should take this forward rather than the Staffing Committee. The HR and OD Business Partner highlighted that the considerable health and safety expertise within the DWP. It was also noted that the Director of DWP had previously attended a meeting of the Staffing Committee to provide further information on sickness absences which would be of interest to new members of the Committee and undertook to circulate this outside of the meeting.

The HR and OD Business Partner informed members that they were working with a partner of Public Health to offer free health checks for those staff aged 40 plus at no cost to the County Council. The primary focus of the offer would be for people who were less likely to attend their GP surgery. Dorset Waste Partnership and Highways workers would be the first target group. The free health check was for both males and females and the scope of the offer was dependent on the resources available from the provider.

Following a question from a member about alcohol testing and whether this had been embedded in the work of the road safety teams and partners, the Acting Specialist Services Lead undertook to look into this further to ensure these areas were included.

**Resolved**

That a short feasibility report into the extension of the wellbeing offer to employees' mobile phones, tablets and devices be undertaken.

Reason for Decision

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

**Agency Staff Usage**

54 The Assistant Director for Care and Protection updated members on the use of agency staff within the Children's Services Directorate and also provided members with an overview of sickness absence within the Directorate. She highlighted the monthly report card specifically produced around agency staff and noted that the current social work vacancy factor stood at 19.61.

The impact of IR35 was highlighted as an issue for now recruiting agency staff.

The Assistant Director for Care and Protection highlighted that on average councils lost £45m a year in lost labour and confirmed that this was a national figure for Children's Services. Members felt it would be helpful to have more local information on the costs within the County Council. The Acting Specialist Services Lead advised that there were a range of interventions in this area whilst recognising that it was a stressful area of work. A range of different pieces of work were being undertaken in order for officers to see how they impacted on the figures.

Following a discussion about recruiting and retraining people from within the Districts and Boroughs, the Assistant Director for Care and Protection highlighted the step up to social work scheme which was open for graduates to apply and possibly district and borough colleagues could be encouraged to apply.

The Chairman felt it would be helpful for the next Headcount report due on 29 January 2018 to include a further focus on agency staff within Children's Services.

**Noted****Programming for Staffing Committee and the Staff Consultative Panel**

55 The Committee considered a report from the Head of Organisational Development which provided an initial draft programme of work for the Committee and also reflected on the relationship between the Staffing Committee and the Staff Consultative Panel.

The Chairman highlighted the workforce planning element of the programme of work and noted the importance of this in conjunction with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Head of Organisational Development advised that a whole Dorset approach to staff vacancies was now starting to emerge and the previous 'we' as in Dorset County Council now referred to everyone in Dorset. Members were content to support the method of a whole Dorset approach to advertising vacancies.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the visioning process that was being carried out by the Dorset Area Joint Committee, and advised that an HR workstream would be set up. She felt it would be helpful for this Committee to consider what other workstreams were needed and for members to be involved.

**Resolved**

1. That the outline programme work set out in the Appendix of the report be agreed for the next 16 months.
2. That a regular LGR update be included on future Staffing Committee agendas.
3. That the use of the Staff Consultative Panel as a forum for engagement and communication with trade unions on strategic issues as part of the Council's consultation framework be supported.

Reason for Decisions

To ensure that business brought to the Staffing Committee was timely and relevant and that effective use was made of the Staff Consultative Panel to keep trade unions informed and support effective employee relations.

**Dorset County Council Employment Terms and Conditions Overview**

56 Members received a presentation from the HR and OD Service Manager on the various employment terms and conditions of staff within Dorset County Council.

Numbers of staff within each of the terms and conditions groups was highlighted. In respect of the TUPE protection category, members were advised these staff were predominantly located within Public Health and the Dorset Waste Partnership. TUPE was also discussed in respect of LGR.

The Chairman felt it was important to perhaps consider holding a members' seminar on HR in the near future in the light of the new organisation.

The HR and OD Service Manager also highlighted the outcomes of reviews of terms and conditions and policies and practices that had been undertaken by the Staffing Committee in the past few years.

**Noted****Gender Pay Gap Reporting**

57 The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive which sought to highlight the background to the gender pay gap reporting requirements and provided information about what needed to be published by the County on both the Dorset For You website and on the National.gov.uk website by the deadline of 31 March 2018.

The HR and OD Service Manager highlighted an approach taken by another authority using infographics which seemed to make the content more meaningful and a similar approach was planned. The main report would be considered by the Committee at the meeting on 29 January 2018. Meanwhile the trade unions had already been involved and the initial figures for the County Council were looking very positive.

**Resolved**

That the requirement for the County Council to publish gender pay gap information under the provision of the Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities), before 31 March 2018 and each subsequent year thereafter be noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the County Council was compliant in respect of the gender pay gap reporting duty.

**Questions from County Councillors**

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

**Exempt Business**

59

**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 60 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 and 2 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.

## Senior Management Roles and Responsibilities - Interim Arrangements

60 **For this item the Head of Organisational Development left the meeting.**

The report highlighted discussions that had been ongoing with Members and senior officers following the departure of the Corporate Director for Children's and Adult and Community Services and recommended that the Chief Executive assumed the accountability of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) on an interim basis.

The Committee also discussed the process for potential changes to members of the corporate leadership team to support both the interim arrangements for the DASS whilst providing support to the very significant challenges of delivering the County Council's transformation programme, significant budget reductions, the impact of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan and Local Government Reorganisation. The Leader and the Committee Chairman would be involved in the initial scoping of any proposed changes prior to any formal process commencing.

On being put to the vote one member felt he could not accept the proposed approach and would prefer that the DASS responsibility was separate from that of the Chief Executive's role.

### **Resolved**

1. That the Chief Executive take on the statutory role of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) on an interim basis delivering the responsibilities shown in the appendix to the Chief Executive's report.
2. That the Director for Children's Services (DCS) post had been filled as an interim Director appointment for a 6 month period, due to expire in April 2018.
3. That the separation of the DASS and DCS role changes take place with immediate effect and be subject to review in January 2018, be reported back to Staffing Committee and onto County Council as soon as possible following this review.
4. That once 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.
5. That if agreed by the County Council, the Adult and Community Services Directorate Scheme of Delegation would be amended.
6. That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Chairman of the committee and Leader of the council, to agree the outcomes of scoping of any proposals for change to other roles of members of the corporate leadership team ahead of normal processes/approvals

### **Reason for Decisions**

To ensure the continued delivery of the County Council's statutory responsibilities and effective management.

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.15 pm