



Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Colliton Park,
Dorchester, DT1 1XJ on Wednesday, 12 September 2018

Present:

Peter Wharf (Chairman)
Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Hilary Cox, Janet Dover and Rebecca Knox

Members Attending

Daryl Turner, Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment

Officers Attending: Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Natalie Adam (HR & OD Service Manager - Advisory Service), Sara Collinson (HR & OD Business Partner), Helen Coombes (Transformation Programme Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme), Mike Harries (Corporate Director for Environment and Economy), Paul Loach (HR and OD Business Partner), Nick Jarman (Corporate Director for Children's Services), James Potten (Senior Communications Officer), Tracy Scott (Principal HR & OD Advisor), Carl Wilcox (HR Specialist Services Lead) 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, 26 November 2018**.)

Apologies for Absence

37 No apologies for absence were received.

Code of Conduct

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

Minutes

39 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018 were confirmed and signed.

Matter arising

In respect of Minute 30, the HR Specialist Services Lead highlighted that the County Council would achieve a 62% reduction in the number of direct employees by the end of 2019 and not as stated in the minutes.

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.

LGR Update

41 The Leader of the Council advised members that a lot of work over the past month had focussed on staffing and that a report entitled Tier 2 Recruitment would be going

to the Shadow Executive meeting on 17 September 2018. She highlighted the importance of the right communication and engagement in discussions and thanked the Chairman of the Staffing Committee for his input which had been very helpful.

The Leader advised that there would be a Chief Executive panel meeting shortly and that the outcome would be presented to the Shadow Council on 27 September 2018. Monthly newsletters on the progress of Local Government Reorganisation were now being sent out. She stressed that the headquarters for the new Authority had not yet been agreed and that South Walks House had only been listed as the registered business address for the new Council. She also added that it was important to get the culture shift across the workforce to recognise that not everything would happen at just one location.

The Service Manager, Advisory Service, explained that there were still budget pressures and consideration was being given around convergence and when that might happen. Officers were keen to get the Trade Unions involved and had agreed to additional facilities time for them. In respect of HR matters in the County Council officers were working on the TUPE lists; the final lists would be produced in February 2019. All restructuring would need to be commenced by 31 October 2018. Staff were being asked to try to plan for using their leave, TOIL (time off in lieu) and flexi in advance of a decision being made about the approach across the councils.

The schools process was now picking up again and work was ongoing with headteachers. Timescales were tight and the biggest area of work was around pay grading and terms and conditions. A key risk for HR was around payroll and systems but officers should receive a decision from HRMC by end of September 2018 which would address this.

The Steps to Wellbeing support process was being put in place and it was planned to highlight this in conjunction with Mental Health awareness day on 10 October 2018. The Service Manager undertook to send some background information on the programme to members of the Committee.

In respect of the Tier 2 Recruitment report the Chairman expressed concern about the quality of the EQIA.

Following a concern from a member about the TUPE and convergence process and how they should align, the Service Manager advised that officers were working hard to secure consistency and undertook to circulate the link to the TUPE timeline on the Sharepoint pages to members of the Committee. The convergence process was being managed by the Programme Team.

The Chairman asked that the Communications Officer report back to the Comms Team about misconception about South Walks House and to let them know that this had led to concerns by Council staff. He also asked the officer to speak with the Team about the convergence issue.

In respect of vacancy management principles, one member expressed concern that at District/Borough level they were still employing new staff and he was concerned about the staff that were already employed. He felt perhaps the message was not getting through. The Service Manager highlighted the process that should be followed, other than for business critical roles, councils should be working together to understand where measures other than recruitment could be put in place, where this was not possible, posts should then be advertised internally (across all councils) initially for a period of 7 days. The Chairman felt that all dual hatted members could help with getting this message across.

One member felt that 7 days was not a long enough period and asked what percentage of posts were being filled internally. The Service Manager advised that there were no statistics available at that point in time.

Noted

Headcount and FTE Figures and Non-Directly Employed Contract Workforce - Quarter 1 2018/19

42 Members considered a report by the Service Director, Organisational Development which covered the different aspects of workforce resourcing in the period up to Quarter 1 2018/19 (ending 30 June 2018). The report highlighted that the Council used a combination of directly employed staff, casual workers, agency workers and specialist workers to cover services or provide or deliver service developments.

The HR & OD Business Partner reported that there was a small increase (of 22.2 FTE) overall in directly employed staff between 31 March 2018 and 30 June 2018 but the spending on agency workers had decreased in Quarter 1 compared to Quarter 4 in all areas except in Dorset Waste Partnership, which saw an increase of £36k between Quarter 4 and Quarter 1.

The Chairman drew members' attention to figures 6 and 7 in the report which showed that both agency and consultancy spend were moving in the right direction.

Following a comment from a member about the 37% reduction in agency workers, the HR & OD Business Partner undertook to circulate further information on actual numbers outside of the meeting.

Members felt this was a good news story and it would be helpful to send out a comms message to this effect. The HR & OD Business Partner noted that the report had featured in the Dorset Echo and on Wessex FM this week.

The Leader of the Council was pleased to note the reduction in agency staff but recognised that if agency staff in Children's social work were needed colleagues would need to understand this. The HR Specialist Services Lead advised that this was a regular item for discussion at the Children's Services Improvement Board and that the agency figures now were the lowest figures for the previous 2 years.

Following a question from a member about why the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) figures were included in the report, the HR & OD Business Partner advised that as Dorset was the host authority for DWP it was appropriate. In respect of high level agency staff, the officer explained that there was a high turnover of loaders and drivers but they had recently gone through quite a significant recruitment process in order to employ more. The Leader of the Council added that in the future the Dorset Council as a whole would be responsible for the DWP.

The Chairman highlighted the number of unfilled posts and recognised that this could lead to stress issues when staff were expected to step up to roles above their pay grades.

Noted

Management of Attendance 2018/19 - Quarter 1 (April to June 2018)

43 The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, Organisational Development which advised that this quarter had seen a slight reduction in sickness absence rates overall within the County Council. Sickness rates were currently 8.24 days which was lower than the local authority average of 10.5 days. Absences in relation to musculoskeletal issues had reduced from June 2017 to June 2018 by 12% in terms of days lost and 21% in terms of cost. However, mental health absences had

increased from 23.4% to 34.7% of all sickness absences during this period.

In respect of mental health absence, the chairman recognised that the County Council had put a lot of effort into engaging with staff and that there was now a better understanding of mental health, which could have contributed to the increase.

Following a question from a member about the increase in mental health absences in Environment and Economy, the HR & OD Business Partner undertook to provide this information outside of the meeting.

In response to a question about market pay being adjusted to retain certain Roadworkers, the HR & OD Business Partner highlighted that for some employees the rate of pay was more important than pension. He added that there was further information about employee benefits stated in their payslips. Following a question from a member about the creation of a tailored package that did not include a pension being offered, the Service Manager advised that this was not feasible but an individual could opt out of the Local Government Pension Scheme if they chose.

In respect of wellbeing information, the Chairman undertook to liaise with the Head of ICT to request that all employees could access the wellbeing information on their own mobile phones.

Following a comment about sickness figures for schools, the Service Manager advised that the County Council was no longer the employer for some schools but it was for the Headteacher and Governing Body to manage the process.

Resolved

That the new sickness absence targets based on role be adopted and that the current DCC sickness target of 7.63 days per annum remain.

Resolved

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

Redundancy Costs - Quarterly Report

44 The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, Organisational Development on costs for redundancy dismissals effective from 1 April to 30 June 2018 (Quarter 1).

It was noted that there were no severance cases that exceeded £100,000 for this period.

Noted

Questions from County Councillors

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

Exempt Business

46 **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 47 to 49 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, 3 and 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.

Environment and Economy Directorate: Redundancy Case

- 47 The Committee considered an exempt joint report by the Corporate Director for Environment and Economy and the Service Director, Organisational Development which outlined a case for voluntary redundancy.

The Service Manager shared with members the key questions that had been asked of the Director prior to the report being presented to members.

Resolved

The Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment and Members of the Committee unanimously approved the redundancy.

Reason for Decision

The Staffing Committee was responsible for the award of discretionary payments in certain cases of redundancy.

People Management Procedure Appeals

- 48 The Committee considered an exempt report by the Service Director, Organisational Development which highlighted a number of issues that had arisen as a result of the current appeals process and the changes proposed to address this. The most important issue that needed to be addressed was the delay in appeals being heard.

Following a question from a member about the number of additional people that would need to be trained for this, the Service Manager confirmed the change would nearly double the number of officers able to hear such appeals.

Resolved

1. That appeals be determined by the Chief Executive, a Corporate Director, Statutory Officer, Service Director or Assistant Director.
2. That Officers with responsibility for hearing appeals will be extended to include those employed on Dorset Grade 17 or equivalent.
3. That appeals in respect of the Chief Executive, a Corporate Director, Statutory Officer, Service Director or Assistant Director would remain unchanged (councillor involvement).

Reason for Decision

To enable appeals to be heard in a timely manner.

PDR Performance and Issues Associated with Vacancy Management

- 49 In response to a request from members, at their meeting on 9 July 2018, for information on Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) and vacancy management, from both Children's and Adult Services, the Committee considered an exempt report by the Corporate Director for Children's Services which explained the reasons behind performance on completion of PDRs and the action being taken to rectify any non-completion, the current vacancy management within Children's Services and the management of associated risks.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services confirmed he was confident that all PDRs would be completed by end of September 2018 as he now had a full complement of officers in his Leadership Team. He advised members that there was a limit to the number of demands that could be addressed and that there had been a need to prioritise all demands. One member felt that as there appeared to be no audit check on PDRs she would prefer to see 50% done well rather than 80% done badly.

In respect of vacancy management the Director reported that whilst there were a number of vacancies, mainly administrative posts, in Children's Services this was a result of the need to achieve a £6.3m savings target and also because of the proximity of Local Government Reorganisation. However, he reported that he had

recently successfully recruited a number of staff to children's social work posts. The Director assured members that where necessary he had recruited as appropriate.

Members noted the greatly improved sickness figures especially in children's social care. The Director advised that he had invested time in visiting the different teams in Children's Services and felt this was really beneficial in maximising staff attendance.

Members congratulated the Director on the work he had achieved since being in post.

The Committee also received a presentation from the Transformation Lead for the Adult and Community Forward Together Programme on key workforce performance data in August 2018 in the Adult and Community Services Directorate.

The Transformation Lead reported that 85% of PDRs had been completed for the 2017/18 period and that mid-year reviews were now underway. There was a big focus on learning and development in the reviews along with a wellbeing offer. She felt the quality of PDRs was now improving.

The rate of sickness for Adult and Community Services in Quarter 1 was 7.57 FTE but the Transformation Lead advised members that it currently stood at 7.17 FTE.

Positive feedback had been received from the recent round of staff roadshows and staff had welcomed the Chairman in his role as Cabinet Member for Workforce at these events. The Leader of the Council felt the appointment of a Cabinet Member for Workforce had been really helpful and hoped that this would be borne in mind for the future Dorset Council.

Noted

Meeting Duration: 10.00 am - 12.30 pm