

AGENDA ITEM 2

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE WAYTEMORE ROOM,
BISHOP'S STORTFORD ON THURSDAY
15 OCTOBER 2009 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D A A Peek (Chairman).
Councillors J Mayes, M P A McMullen
(substitute for J O Ranger), S Rutland-Barsby,
N Wilson, M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Helen Farrell	- Human Resources Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Assistant
Jaleh Nahvi	- Human Resources Officer

310 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J O Ranger and C Woodward. It was noted that Councillor M P A McMullen was substituting for Councillor J O Ranger.

311 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman commented that Emma Freeman, Head of People and Organisational Services, had submitted her apologies for the meeting.

ACTIONRESOLVED ITEMS312 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 15 July 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

313 CORPORATE TRAINING REPORT

Officers submitted a report updating the Committee in respect of the 2008/09 Corporate Training Plan. Members were advised that the plan included legal and mandatory training. The Committee noted that it had not been possible to complete the full programme of training due to staff shortages.

Members were advised that feedback from the first cohort of the management development programme had been included at Essential Reference Paper 'B' attached to the report now submitted. Officers reported that some of the savings identified by the Dragons Den programme had been implemented.

Members were advised that the new Performance Development Review (PDR) scheme had been launched and significantly more Officers had completed the PDR process than in previous years. The Council had also been successful in being re-awarded the Investors in People (IIP) status. The Assessor had been very impressed with the turnaround achieved in a year with the PDR process.

Councillor J Mayes sought clarification on the cost of the IIP process to the Council. The Committee was advised that the member fee was £2000 and the fee for the assessment was £1500.

The Committee noted the report as now submitted.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that the achievements in the learning and development review 2008/09 be noted.

314 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

Officers submitted a progress report in respect of Equality and Diversity for 2008/09. Members were reminded of the Council's obligations under the Race Relations Act.

Members were advised of a number of gaps in equalities data. The Human Resources section would work with the Equalities Officer Group to identify areas where further information was needed.

Members were advised that Officers had no major concerns and the Equality and Diversity action plan would address this issue. The Committee was advised that more work was required with Manpower to ensure the Council secured more data on recruitment and training.

Officers commented that data held by the Council was out of date and should be updated to meet obligations as set out in the 2009 Equalities Act.

Councillor J Mayes commented that the report did not suggest solutions for succession planning. The Committee was advised that when the Authority advertised vacant posts, Officers ensured that advertising covered a broad range of ages.

The Chairman commented that the era where employees worked for an organisation for many years had passed. He also emphasised the importance of succession planning.

Councillor M Wood commented that not all of the new arrivals in East Herts were from Eastern Europe. He referred to residents from other European Union States, such as Portugal. Officers undertook to take this on board. Councillor Wood stated that a significant number of people from other EU countries worked at Stansted Airport and in

ACTION

the catering industry.

The Committee approved the report as now submitted.

RESOLVED - that (A) the Equality and Diversity report 2008/09 be noted;

(B) Officers work in partnership with Manpower to address the return rate and completion rate of application monitoring forms; DIS

(C) monitoring forms for corporate training courses to outline clearer analyses of attendees be introduced; DIS

(D) the Council's duties in line with the single Equality Act 2009 be reviewed; and DIS

(E) employees be requested to update equalities monitoring data in 2010/11 to ensure that accurate information was captured in time for the introduction of the new HR system in 2011. DIS

315 HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - OCTOBER 2009

The Director of Internal Services submitted the Quarterly Performance Report for Human Resources (HR) for October 2009. He stated that the report represented a log of the achievements for the HR team.

The Director referred to the continual low turnover of Officers at 1.88%. He attributed this to a general reluctance of Officers to change jobs in the current financial climate. He commented that the people strategy had been launched and referred to the pressures of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The Director stated that formal negotiations were ongoing in respect of overtime and terms and conditions. Meetings

ACTION

were being held with Officers next week and work would continue towards a collective agreement with Unison.

Members were advised that, as part of the Corporate Training Plan, protocols had changed to ensure that internal training was as professional as possible and provided value for money. The Director referred to a number of training protocols as detailed in the report now submitted.

The Director commented that the staff survey had highlighted how some Officers felt that senior management could work more effectively. He stated that the C3W process was progressing and there would be a number of HR implications.

Members were advised that statistics in respect of the impact of swine flu had been detailed separately in the report. The Director thanked HR Officers for their achievements to date.

Councillor J Mayes commented that Officers could feel devalued if training events no longer included a lunch for attendees. Officers commented that this had been a suggestion by Officers to conserve resources. Lunches could be re-instated as necessary.

In response to a query in respect of whether the new Retirement Policy had been well received, the Director stated that the Authority had a statutory duty to consider applications for retirement.

The Director commented that the Retirement Policy had been clearly explained and Officers could apply to part retire and reduce their hours subject to the needs of the service. He stated that a lot of Officers had enquired about the Flexible Working Policy.

The Committee noted the report as now submitted.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that the quarterly performance report be noted.

316 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS
APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2009

Officers submitted a report in respect of Human Resources Management Statistics for April to September 2009. The Committee was advised that the report updated Members on progress against HR targets in 2009.

Officers commented that the impact of swine flu on the Council had been minimal with 8 full time days being lost to date due to swine flu. Members were advised that the Authority was performing well against short and long term sickness targets so the figures should be within target by year end.

The Committee was advised that training and development and performance management were meeting new targets. The PDR return rate was 77% against a 100% target. Most services were at 100% and HR was working with services where the percentage was below target.

It was noted that 80% of Officers had received some form of corporate training in 2009 whereas this figure had been 50% last year. In response to a query from Councillor M P A McMullen, Officers confirmed that sickness absence was lower than in previous years. The Human Resources Officer undertook to e-mail the Member the 2009 figures after the meeting.

Councillor M Wood congratulated Officers on some big improvements in performance. The Chairman also congratulated the all round performance of HR Officers.

The Committee noted the report as now submitted.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that that the HR Management Statistics for April - September 2009 be noted.

317 LOCAL JOINT PANEL – MINUTES: 16 SEPTEMBER 2009

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 16 September 2009 be received.

(see also Minutes 318 – 319 below)

318 REVISED HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

The Committee considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 16 September 2009 on revised and new Human Resources Policies.

RESOLVED – that (A) the revised and new Human Resources Policies be approved; DIS

(B) the revised Redundancy Policy (previously Achieving Organisational Change Policy) and Retirement Policy be approved; and DIS

(C) the Council's policy on Pension Regulations, specifically Regulation 13 (Power to award additional pension) included within the Retirement Policy and as amended, be endorsed. DIS

(see also Minute 317 above)

319 REVISED HOME WORKING POLICY

The Committee considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 16 September 2009 on the approval of the new Home Working Policy.

ACTION

RESOLVED – that (A) subject to the minor amendments now detailed, the Home Working Policy be approved; and

DIS

(B) Officers report back in 12 months.

DIS

(see also Minute 317 above)

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Chairman
Date