

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2012, AT 3.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor Colin Woodward (Chairman)
Councillors P Ballam, G McAndrew,
J Ranger and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of People, ICT and Property Services
Jaleh Nahvi	- Human Resources Officer

167 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs D Hone, A Warman and N Wilson. It was noted that Councillor G McAndrew was substituting for Councillor Mrs D Hone.

168 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

169 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Notwithstanding changes arising from the Localism Act 2011 with regard to Declarations of Interest, Councillor P Ruffles

queried whether he should declare an interest in the matter referred to at Minute 170 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Hertfordshire County Council. Further clarification would be sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer.

170 RECRUITMENT REVIEW

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report on the recruitment service following a decision by Hertfordshire County Council, not to renew the contract with Manpower which is due to expire on 7 April 2013. As a result of this and decisions which the Council still needed to make regarding Shared Services, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services was proposing an interim arrangement concerning recruitment. She explained what options were available in relation to temporary and permanent staff recruitment.

The Head of People, ICT and Property emphasised that it was necessary for the Council to have these arrangements in place until the Council had made a decision on Shared Services, which would be considered by the Executive on 28 November 2012. She explained that following a review of recruitment volumes, the HR service was confident that permanent recruitment could be handled in-house and that a full review of permanent recruitment be carried out as part of Shared Services.

Councillor J Ranger explained the software difficulties being experienced by East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) and their Regional Recruitment Portal. He stressed the need to ensure that decisions around advertising companies and agencies should consider what service they provided. Councillor J Ranger suggested that the Council should look for those who provided a "full service" such as acknowledging applications and providing timeframes to those applicants who were unsuccessful.

Councillor J Ranger supported the use of local suppliers in relation to temporary recruitment. Officers explained the Council's arrangements in relation to the use of temporary staff and Manpower's billing rates.

Members supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the recruitment service for both permanent and temporary staff be managed in-house by the Human Resource services from 8 April 2013 including the exploration of partnership working with Stevenage and North Herts Councils;

(B) low cost advertising be explored, including the use of the HCC bulletin, Link and arrangements with other Councils and free websites;

(C) officers research further the timeframe and use of the EELGA portal given its software problems and if this was not feasible, then Officers explore the use of jobsgopublic.com, network group and bulk purchasing of advertisements; and

(D) officers establish supplier agreements with local suppliers but that no contracts be entered into for temporary recruitment until decisions have been made on Shared Services and a review of temporary recruitment undertaken.

171 ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY REPORT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report summarising the recommendations from the 2011/12 Employment Equality and Diversity report and making a number of recommendations for 2012/13.

Councillor P Ruffles supported the production of the report commenting on the need for the Council to be sensitive to a culture of those whose characteristics were protected and queried whether the Council was doing as much as it could. Officers explained the Council's ongoing schemes to support equality and diversity and what reasonable adjustments had been made as a result of the positive responses received. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services explained that the Council was proactive in addressing the "softer" side

of cultural awareness and those with “protected characteristics”.

Councillor J Ranger commented that although he could not recommend anything for further inclusion, the Council must not become complacent. He appreciated the content of the report but expressed concern about the value of the extensive information produced.

Councillor G McAndrew queried the Council’s duty of care to those members of staff who chose not to declare that they had a disability. The Council’s position was clarified, in that as soon as a disability had been declared, then adjustments could be made.

Members approved the Annual Equalities and Diversity Report and supported the recommendations for 2012/13.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Equalities and Diversity Report be supported;

(B) Officers review the Council’s equalities monitoring targets for disability and ethnicity when the Census 2011 data became available;

(C) the data cleanse be refreshed as part of the HR and Payroll system upgrade and following on from this, the disability status be refreshed every two years to ensure accuracy of information held;

(D) arrangements for recruitment (in-house or external) be reviewed to ensure that relevant checks are in place for recruitment monitoring and which also supports the Council’s commitment under the Jobcentre Plus Disability “Two Ticks” Scheme; and

(E) staff who undertake training via the Council’s Professional and Vocational Training Policy be monitored so that this information could be incorporated into the 2012/13 equalities report.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report following the results of a staff survey undertaken in November 2011 and an Investors in People (IIP) award which had highlighted some areas for improvement. Corporate Management Team had subsequently supported the development of an Employee Engagement Action Plan to address issues of concern.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services explained that some of the values in the “status” column of the Action Plan attached to the report now submitted, had been completed. Updates were provided.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern regarding the generally low rates of completion for PDRs. He urged Corporate Management Team to take a more forceful approach with those Managers who did not follow through the process, suggesting that the Managers responsible should be negatively appraised one level on their own PDR assessments. Councillor J Ranger stated that jobs were continually evolving and that PDRs gave staff an opportunity to raise concerns. The Head of People ICT and Property Services explained that PDR returns now stood at 72% and how the process operated.

Members approved the Employee Engagement Action Plan as amended and supported the concerns regarding a more forceful approach to be taken against Managers who did not follow the PDR process.

RESOLVED – that the Employee Engagement Action Plan as amended, be approved.

173 UPDATE ON 2011 EQUAL PAY AUDIT ACTIONS

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report updating Members on the actions identified in the 2011 Equal Pay Audit.

In response to a query by Councillor J Ranger regarding the use of HAY to quality assure a selection of recent job

evaluations, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services provided an update.

Members noted the report and the updates.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

174 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2012

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report detailing performance indicators for the period 1 April to 30 September 2012, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger expressed concern regarding the corporate training statistics of 4.74% against a target of 48.28% and suggested that staff should be encouraged to take up “E” learning. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services explained that that this figure did not include recent web based training centred on Data Protection. Officers advised that HR had introduced regular emails to all staff on what training was available. This was welcomed.

The Committee Chairman reminded Officers that Members had previously supported the suggestion of mandatory “E” learning and of its application particularly in relation to health and safety matters.

Members were very concerned regarding the PDR statistics and the important role of Managers and Heads of Service in ensuring that they should meet the Council’s target of 100%. It currently stood at 72%. In the circumstances, Members supported a suggestion that those Managers who failed to follow through the process, should be negatively appraised one level on their own PDR assessments.

Members noted the quarterly performance statistics.

RESOLVED – that (A) the quarterly performance statistics be noted;

(B) the introduction of the training bulletin be welcomed;

(C) those Managers who failed to reach a PDR completion target of 100% should be negatively appraised one level on their own PDR assessment and that this issue be referred to Corporate Management Team with the results reported back to Human Resources Committee; and

(D) Officers consider the use of “E” learning for mandatory matters.

175 HUMAN RESOURCES - QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report summarising people management statistics and human resource delivery for the quarter up to October 2012, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services drew attention to the fact that the Inland Revenue had increased the home worker allowance from £156 to £216 and that this would be backdated from 1 April 2012 for the 40 home workers who currently received this tax free allowance.

Members were reminded that a meeting of the Executive had been scheduled for 28 November 2012 to consider the business case for the Shared Services Programme.

Members noted the report and supported the increase in the Home Working allowance to £216 with effect from 1 April 2012.

RESOLVED – that (A) the quarterly performance report be noted; and

(B) the increase in the Home Working allowance to £216 per annum effect from 1 April 2012 be approved.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm

Chairman

Date