

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL
2018, AT 3.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Colin Woodward (Chairman)
Councillors P Boylan, S Bull, M McMullen,
P Ruffles and M Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Vicki David	- Human Resources Officer
Claire Kirby	- Human Resources Officer
Kate Leeke	- Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

437 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor S Cousins.

438 MINUTES

Members referred to Minute 312 (Presentation by

Occupational Health) and queried what action had been taken on the development of a Mental Health Policy. It was noted that the Council already had trained First Aiders and that Councillor P Moore was the Council's Mental Health Champion. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that staff involved with mental health would need to be well trained and the Council would need to be guided by clinicians in the development of any policy. Members asked the Interim Head to report back with a draft paper on how Mental Health First Aiders could be implemented to support staff.

Councillor P Boylan referred to Minute 310 (Minutes) and the fact that 25% of staff were "exceeding expectations" and reminded Officers that the Committee had asked for a report addressing the issue of talent management. It was noted that this would be addressed within the Human Resources Annual Report.

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Additionally, that the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development report back on how mental health support can be addressed in the context of the Council's duty of care to its employees.

After being put to the vote and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development report back to Members on how mental health support can be addressed in the context of the

Council's duty of care to its employees.;

(B) the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development address the issue of talent management within the HR Annual Report; and

(C) the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

439 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Committee Chairman referred to a new requirement for more visual and transparent decision making. To this end, all recommendations (including the Minutes) and recommendations made by the Local Joint Panel, needed to be formerly moved and seconded and be voted on.

440 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report setting out the annual Pay Policy Statement required under Sections 38 and 40 of the Localism Act. The Interim Head provided a summary of the report and advised that a 2 year staff pay award had been agreed from 1 April 2018.

Councillor P Boylan sought clarification of the pay award made to the Chief Executive. The Interim Head said that 1% had been offered nationally and this had been refused. The Interim Head said that the Chief Executive's salary was 6.2 times the average salary which was well within the target of 10 times the average salary of the lowest paid.

The Interim Head said she noted differing annual leave entitlements according to grade and as part of a wider review of remuneration this could be looked at in the long term. This was supported.

Clarification was sought and provided on progression schemes for Heads of Service and 360 degree appraisals.

Councillor P Boylan questioned what plans the Council had in terms of working towards a National Living Wage by a 2020 timeframe. Members supported the suggestion of an update at the next meeting.

It was moved by Councillor M McMullen and seconded by Councillor P Boylan that the Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19 be recommended for approval to Council. Additionally that a report on the progress made on a National Living Wage be presented at the next meeting and that a review be undertaken of annual leave discrepancies. After being put to the meeting, and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

The Committee supported the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (a) the Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19 be recommended for approval to Council;

(B) Officers provide an update on the progress towards a National Living Wage at the next meeting; and

(C) differing annual entitlements according to grade be reviewed and reported back to Members.

441 GENDER PAY GAP

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report on the Council's gender pay gap for 2017.

The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the report, adding that this was a statutory requirement for organisations with 250 or more employees. She explained that the Council's mean gender pay gap was 8.46% and the median gender pay gap was 16.96%. There was no bonus pay gap as the Council did not make bonus payments. The Human Resources Officer said that this compared favourably with that of the UK as a whole as well as within the public sector.

The Human Resources Officer explained that there were more women in the lower pay scales with men concentrated in particular areas. Additionally, there was a greater proportion of men in the upper pay quartiles compared with lower pay quartiles and a greater proportion of women in the lower pay quartiles compared with upper pay quartiles. As such this had an impact on the Council's gender pay gap. The Human Resources Officer explained that as a result, the Council would be prioritising on a number of areas to reduce the gender pay gap :

- Recruitment – attracting more men into the Council, particularly into the lower graded roles
- Flexible working – in every role at every level;
- Breaking down gender stereotypes – in terms of traditionally “male or “female” areas of work.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with

assurances on progress reports on the actions proposed.

In response to a query from Councillor M Stevenson, the Human Resources Officer explained what lower graded roles were, e.g., those in customer services, revenues and benefits, and business support functions. Following a review of recruitment data and processes, no pattern had been established as to why some applicants/interviewees were not offered roles.

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Gender Pay Gap for 2017 as detailed, be noted. Additionally, that a progress report be presented on the initiatives outlined above, to reduce the gender pay gap.

After being put to the vote and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

The Committee supported the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Gender Pay Gap for 2017 for 2018/19 be noted; and

(B) a progress report be presented on the initiatives outlined to reduce the gender pay gap.

442 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS -
QUARTERLY REPORT

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report setting out management statistics for the period 1 January 2018 to 14 March 2018. The Human Resources Officer summarised the report and

highlighted a number of key areas. She referred to the current head count of 345 which equated to 301.44 full time equivalent posts. It was noted that the number of vacant posts was 50, which was 45.34 expressed as FTE posts.

Members were advised that turnover for the whole year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was 14.9% against a target of 10%. The current volunteer leavers' rate for quarter 4 was 1.7% and for the whole year 12.3% against a target of 10%. A summary of leaver turnover by service was provided. There were 9 involuntary leavers and involuntary turnover for the period was 0.3% and for the whole year this was 2.5%. A summary of sickness absence and work related accidents, reportable accidents (none) and equalities monitoring statistics were provided.

The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the Learning and Development programme for 2017/18. It was noted that completed Performance Development Reviews now stood at 82%.

The Committee Chairman referred to the fact that there were 50 vacant posts and queried how long these had been vacant and whether the roles were needed. The HR Officer explained that the service was working with Heads of Service to review establishments and give consideration as to whether these roles were needed.

Councillor M McMullen referred to the high volume of voluntary leavers. The Human Resources Officer explained that during 2017/18, a number of restructures had taken place and turnover had been high as a result. However, this had fallen each quarter and currently remained above the target.

Councillor S Bull expressed concern at the loss of Planning Officers and queried why they had left and that 21% across the organisation seemed a high figure for those choosing a different career. The Human Resources Officer explained that as a result of the high turnover, exit interviews were being closely monitored and results were largely positive with no trends having been identified. Staff were encouraged to complete exit questionnaires and submissions could be made anonymously. Confirmation was also provided that the Annual Turnover report 2017/18, which would be presented in July 2018, would give more detailed information. The Chairman suggested that if the high leaving figures continued, a further report be presented to Members. This was supported.

The Committee Chairman referred to the new General Data Protection Regulations and sought assurances that the Council was “up to speed”. The Interim Head provided an update and outlined what was proposed in terms of e-learning training platforms for both Officers and Members. She suggested a proposal to have mandatory training for some roles, e.g., health and safety. The Committee Chairman suggested that once a list of roles had been identified, the training could be rolled out to Town and Parish Councils.

Councillor P Boylan was concerned that a number of Town Clerks felt “in the dark” about the forthcoming GDPR and needed training.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor P Boylan, that the Human Resources statistics, as detailed be noted. Additionally that a further report be presented to Members should the high volume of leavers

continues. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

The Committee supported the recommendations now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Human Resource Management Statistics for the period 1 January 2018 to 14 March 2018 as now submitted, be noted; and

(B) should the high volume of leavers continue, a report be presented to Members for consideration.

443 LOCAL JOINT PANEL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING: 21 MARCH 2018

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Minutes of the Local Joint Panel be received. After being put to the vote and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2018 be received.

(See also Minutes 444 to 446)

444 GRIEVANCE POLICY

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Local Joint Panel held on 21 March 2018.

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Grievance Policy, as submitted, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Grievance Police as submitted, be approved.

(See Minute 443 above)

445 RECRUITMENT, INDUCTION AND PROBATION POLICY

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Local Joint Panel held on 21 March 2018.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor M McMullen that the Recruitment, Induction and Probation Policy as submitted, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Recruitment, Induction and Probation Policy as submitted, be approved.

(See Minute 443 above)

446 CLOSURE OF OFFICES ON CHRISTMAS EVE

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Local Joint Panel held on 21 March 2018.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development reminded Members that a member of staff via the suggestion scheme, had proposed that the offices close on Monday, as Christmas Day fell on a Tuesday.

The Interim Head explained that the Local Joint Panel had debated the issue at length and Members (including the

Panel Chairman), were concerned about the impact an enforced closure might have on the public and the Emergency Teams.

The Interim Head explained that arising from the Local Joint Panel, she had followed up on the concerns raised with managers and service heads who had confirmed their reassurance that services' would have good communications in place and that the public would be given advance notification of a closure over a five day holiday period. It was noted that the Council would also achieve savings in terms of lighting and heating costs should the offices close for a five day period.

The Interim Head explained that the LJP had been advised about the options available to staff in terms of leave arrangements to accommodate a proposed Christmas Eve closure and the fact that Stevenage Council, (who shared some joint services with East Herts) would be asked to take a half day's leave.

In response to a query from the Committee Chairman, the Interim Head explained the definition of cost neutral (given staff would take a day of leave to cover the day of absence).

Councillor P Boylan felt conflicted by the proposal to close on Christmas Eve, in terms of the impact this would have on the provision of public services and the precedent this might set. He added that if staff wanted Christmas Eve off, they could ask for it. Members were reminded that the closure would only happen every seven years and the need for managers to make decisions on possibly multiple leave requests, for the same day.

Councillor P Ruffles referred to the LJP meeting and the very strong concerns expressed by the Panel Members and echoed by the Panel Chairman.

The recommendation to close the offices on Christmas Eve was moved by Councillor S Bull but this was not supported by a seconder. Members felt that as a public service, the general public should have access to all of the Council's services and that the enforced closure of the offices covering a five day period, could impact negatively in terms of public perception and service delivery.

It was moved by Councillor P Boylan and seconded by Councillor P Ruffles, that Christmas Eve should be viewed as a normal working day and the offices should be open and accessible to the public, as usual. After being put to the vote and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Christmas Eve should be viewed as a normal working day and the offices should be open and accessible to the public, in the usual way.

(See Minute 443 above)

447 HEALTH AND SAFETY : MINUTES 21 DECEMBER 2017

The Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 21 December 2017 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2017 be received.

The meeting closed at 4.25 pm

Chairman
Date