

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY 2012, AT 3.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor Jim Ranger (Chairman)
Councillors P Ballam, P Ruffles, A Warman
and N Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors P Moore

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Claire Kirby	- Human Resources Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Jaleh Nahvi	-

548 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2012/13

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report concerning a requirement, of the Localism Act, for the Council to produce annually (from 2012/13), a pay policy statement relating to the remuneration of Chief Officers, the remuneration of the lowest paid employees, and the relationship between Chief Officers' remuneration and that of other officers.

The Director of Internal Services and the Head of People, ICT and Property Services declared a Personal and

Prejudicial Interest in this item. The Director of Internal Services suggested that both he and the Head of People, ICT and Property Services would stay in the Council Chamber in order to answer points of clarification and agreed to leave during the debate.

It was noted that further guidance had been received from Central Government, which was tabled with a number of proposed changes to the report now submitted, relating to pages 19 - 25 to reflect that guidance. Clarification explaining the rationale behind each of the proposed changes on the respective pages was provided by the Director of Internal Services.

The Director of Internal Services and the Head of People, ICT and Property Services left the room during the debate on the report.

Members supported the changes proposed as set out in the tabled documents. Additionally, the Chairman proposed the following changes:

Page 19 – paragraph two after “The Council will...” insert “subject to negotiation”;

Page 20 – in the paragraph which commences with “The pension scheme provides...”, Members suggested that the sentence commencing with ...“The Council’s Human Resources Committee” should be made clearer.

Page 22 – the paragraph commencing with “If an employee leaves....”insert “normally” after “they may”.

Members supported these changes.

Members agreed to recommend the Pay Policy Statement 2012 as now amended.

RECOMMENDED – that the Pay Policy Statement 2012 as now amended, be approved.

549 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, it was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor N Wilson, that Councillor J Ranger chair the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor J Ranger be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

550 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors D Hone and C Woodward.

551 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that it would be necessary to convene a further meeting of Human Resources Committee before the scheduled March 2012 meeting to consider an important item of business.

552 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

553 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Director of Internal Services and the Head of People, ICT and Property Services declared personal and prejudicial interests in the matter referred to at Minute 548 - Pay Policy Statement 2012. They both remained in the Chamber to answer points of clarification, but left the room during the debate.

554 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report concerning Equality, Diversity and Employment

(2010/11) as required by Statute in terms of the Council's duties and monitoring.

Members congratulated Officers on the report.

In response to a query concerning the emphasis on religion, Members were advised that this was a protected characteristic.

Councillor P Ballam stated that within the context of the report, those undertaking a course of study outside of the "in house" training provision would not be recorded. Members supported a suggestion that this aspect be addressed within a future report.

Clarification was provided on the use of the term "return rate" in terms of staff responses to the form. It was noted that a further report would be submitted in three months time when the "return levels" would be reviewed.

Members agreed the report as set out in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Equality and Diversity report be noted;

(B) the report be published on the Council's website to ensure the Council complies with Statute;

(C) recruitment processes be reviewed to ensure that they are not indirectly discriminating against any of those within the protected characteristic groups;

(D) attendance at training courses be reviewed to establish why part-time workers are underrepresented;
and

(E) a programme of internal Equality Impact Assessments continues for 2012/13 incorporating policy reviews, service restructures and relevant human resource procedures.

555 VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report concerning the legal status of volunteers. The report now submitted, provided feedback on the current volunteering pilot and the new Volunteering Policy. Assurances were provided that volunteers would only provide assistance for East Herts' events and activities and that these would be limited.

In response to a query, Officers advised that CRB checks would be undertaken in liaison with the relevant Line Manager.

Members approved the Volunteering Policy, as set out in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED – that the Volunteering Policy be approved.

(see Minute 561 below)

556 RETIREMENT POLICY

The Head of people, ICT and Property Services submitted a report on the new Retirement Policy which was set out in the report now submitted. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services advised that since that report had been submitted to the Local Joint Panel, notification had been received from the Council's Insurers, that they would extend insurance for staff up to 70 years of age. It was noted that 13 members of staff were over 65 years but only three would require insurance under the new extension. Declarations of health would need to be provided.

Members noted the update and approved the revised Retirement Policy.

RESOLVED – that the Retirement Policy be approved.

(see Minute 561 below)

557 PDR QUALITY REVIEW

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report outlining the results of the Performance Development Review (PDR) quality checking exercise and outlined the changes to the PDR scheme, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

The Chairman commented on the recent unsatisfactory levels of completion rates in relation to the PDR process and suggested that management should be informed that PDRs should be completed on time and that it should become one of managers' six objectives and that further training should be provided. Members supported this suggestion. The Chairman outlined the benefits to employees, when the process was handled as it should. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services undertook to ensure that the process was applied to Stevenage employees as part of the transfer arrangements.

Members noted the results and changes to the PDR Scheme and supported the suggestion that the timely submission of completed PDRs be included as a management objective and that this information be included as part of the induction process.

RESOLVED – that (A) the results and changes to the PDR Quality Checking exercise and scheme be noted; and

(B) the timely submission of completed PDRs be included as a management objective and that this information be included as part of the induction process.

558 EQUAL PAY AUDIT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report on the results of the 2011 Equal Pay Audit. The

Equality and Human Rights Commission require that EqPAs be carried out every two years and the “Green Book” recommended that they be carried out annually. The Chairman suggested that paragraph 4.2.1 be amended by the removal of the word “generally”. This was supported.

In response to a query concerning the value of work carried out, the Chairman advised that the Hay Scheme was a valuable source of information for comparative purposes.

The recommendations based on the findings of the EqPA 2011 were set out in the Action Plan, attached to the report now submitted. It was suggested that the Action Plan be amended by the inclusion of training for career progression. This was supported.

RESOLVED – that (A) the results of the 2011 Equal Pay Audit be noted; and

(B) the recommendations set out in the Action Plan, as amended and attached to the report now submitted, be approved.

559 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report on Human Resources quarterly performance to January 2012. The report detailed the current headcount and number of starters. Turnover stood at 6.22%.

In addition to updates already the subject of separate reports included elsewhere on the agenda, updates were provided in relation to:

- East of England’s Regional Recruitment Portal project;
- Learning and Development. It was noted that the Council had been awarded the Members’ Charter for supporting Members in training and development; and

- Shared Support Services programme.

Members noted the quarterly performance update.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

560 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY STATISTICS

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report detailing performance indicators for the period 1 April – 30 November 2011.

Members noted that staff turnover stood at 6.22% against a target of 10%. The current rate of projected short-term sickness absence for the year was 3.8 days against a target of 5 days and that the average long-term sickness absence per FTE was 1.59 days against a target of 2.5 days.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services reported that of the 44 new starters in 2011/12, 36 staff had transferred from Stevenage Borough Council as part of the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service. A 97% attendance at Induction Training for the new staff had been recorded.

Updates were provided in relation to the Council's PDR Scheme. Revenues and Benefits had achieved a 96.85% return with the rest of the Council achieving a 59.57% return for the 2011 review. Training was being rolled out to Managers.

The report summarised equalities monitoring statistics, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

Members noted the quality performance report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

561 LOCAL JOINT PANEL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER AND 6 DECEMBER 2011

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Local Joint Panel

meeting held on 13 September and 6 December 2011 be received.

(see also Minutes 555 – 556 above and 562 below)

562 DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE POLICY

The Committee considered and supported the recommendations of the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 13 September 2011 on the Disturbance Allowance Policy.

RESOLVED – that (A) car drivers be paid 5p per mile for every passenger they take to or from the new contractual site office base who would otherwise be entitled to the mileage element of the Disturbance Payment to encourage car sharing and in the interests of “green” travel; and

(B) the Disturbance Allowance Scheme use the “quickest” rather than the “shortest” route to and from the new contractual base.

(see also Minute 561 above).

The meeting closed at 4.25pm

Chairman
Date