

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2013, AT 3.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Woodward (Chairman).
Councillors Mrs D Hone, G McAndrew,
J Ranger, P Ruffles, A Warman and
N Wilson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of People, ICT and Property Services
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

544 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report seeking support for the publication of the annual Pay Policy Statement 2013/14 by 31 March 2013, as required by Section 38 of the Localism Act. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services summarised the main points contained in the report which was, she stated, similar to last year's, but with some minor changes, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper "B" of the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger provided an update regarding ongoing negotiations between unions regarding the lower paid. On the issue of disturbance payments, he referred to the fact that many Councils had switched to HMRC (HM Revenues and Customs) rates and of the possibility that East Herts might have to revisit this issue.

Councillor J Ranger referred to the “Pay Ceilings” of Directors’ posts as set out in Essential Reference Paper “B” of the report now submitted, adding that he felt the wording to be confusing as it currently stood. Following clarification by the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services, Councillor J Ranger suggested that the wording “will be” should be deleted and replaced with “is” as this did not reflect current pay rates. This was supported.

Councillor J Ranger noted the reference to a review of senior management pay which had been delayed. Councillor J Ranger suggested that if the report could be completed quickly it would be beneficial to hold an emergency meeting of the Human Resources Committee to consider it rather than wait until the March meeting.

In response to a query by Councillor G McAndrew regarding health insurance, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services confirmed that BUPA was only available to a small number of senior level employees. In response to a further query, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services agreed to write to the Member separately regarding how many employees still had use of a lease car. The casual and essential car user scheme was explained.

Members supported approval of the report, as now amended.

RECOMMENDATION – that the Pay Policy Statement 2013/14, as now amended be approved.

545 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P Ballam. It was noted that Councillor G McAndrew was substituting for Councillor P Ballam.

546 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

547 PENSION AUTO ENROLMENT REPORT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report updating Members on the new Auto Pension Enrolment following the introduction of new “staged” pension duties which had been introduced in October 2012. The “staging” date for East Herts was 1 January 2014. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services summarised the new pension duties of all large employers of staff in terms of their “contractual involvement” which the Council had now implemented. An Executive Summary of the scheme was set out in Essential Reference Paper “B” of the report now submitted.

Councillor J Ranger explained that negotiations were still taking place with the Treasury regarding the lower paid and the possibility of “half rate” pensions. He suggested that implementation of the Council’s scheme should be delayed until 1 April 2014 until these issues had been resolved. Members supported this suggestion.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services explained employers’ obligations in terms of “opting in” and the restrictions placed on employers of those who might wish to “opt out”. In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew regarding the 48 employees who had opted out of the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Head of People ICT and Property Services suggested that there may be a mix of salary grades of staff who had opted out, possibly because of

financial pressures. She undertook to write to the Member.

Members noted the report and supported the recommendation that implementation of the scheme be delayed until 1 April 2014.

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

(B) implementation of the scheme be delayed until 1 April 2014.

548 HUMAN RESOURCES - QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report summarising people management statistics and human resource delivery for the quarter up to 16 January 2013. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services reminded Members that arrangements were underway to bring recruitment back “in house” and that the Council’s payroll would be transferring to the payroll system for Stevenage from 1 April 2013. The programme was currently at the testing stage.

Updates were provided in relation to Learning and Development in terms of the Corporate Training Plan for 2012/13 and the introduction of E-Learning. It was noted that the Maternity/Paternity Policy was currently being reviewed. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services provided an update in relation to Equalities and Diversity and proposals for the Shared Support Services Programme. It was noted that facilities management and joint procurement were currently being explored and that the Human Resource Service would be reconsidered in 2013/14.

In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew concerning E-learning and its use by Town and Parish Councils and of possible associated additional costs, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services confirmed that the Council would not incur additional charges and that it was the intention to roll out E-Learning wider to maximise the benefits.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

549 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services submitted a report detailing human resource performance indicators for the period 1 April to 30 November 2012, the detail of which was set out in Essential Reference Paper “B” of the report now submitted.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services stated that projected turnover for 2012/13 was 8.75% against a target of 10% and that short term sickness absence was 4.11 days against a target of 5 days. It was noted that as at 30 November 2012, there were no employees on long term sick. During that period there had been 49 vacancies which had been filled internally by 28 members of staff.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services referred to the Council’s PDR Scheme and hoped that the Council’s corporate outturn would match that of Revenues and Benefits of 100%. Updates were provided on the Council’s Corporate Training Plan and equalities monitoring data in terms of those staff with a disability and those of black and minority ethnic origin. In response to a query from Councillor P Ruffles concerning equalities indicators, the Head of People, ICT and Property Services confirmed that the indicators had been agreed at an earlier meeting of Human Resources Committee in discussing census data.

In response to a query from the Committee Chairman, the Head of People ICT and Property Services was confident that these figures were accurate following a recent “data cleanse”. She agreed that there was an option on the part of staff, to choose not to provide information.

The Head of People, ICT and Property Services advised that 64.74% of women made up the Council’s workforce, with 43.96% of women in middle management group. In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew regarding those

women who worked part-time and their employment prospects at senior level, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services referred to the legal obligations of equality of opportunity and confirmed that Senior Management Group now comprised 50% women and 50% men.

Councillor J Ranger urged the Council to ensure recruitment costs were kept down and suggested the use of websites. This was acknowledged. The Head of People, ICT and Property Services advised that HR was also developing a way to put application forms online. She confirmed that the Council used the "Jobs Go Public" website.

In response to a query from Councillor G McAndrew regarding recruitment and whether this was done on a "like for like" basis, the Head of People ICT and Property explained that a Head of Service would normally review a vacant post and how this could be best managed. Recruitment was not normally done on the basis of "like for like". It was also noted that any recruitment requests had to be approved by Corporate Management Team.

Members noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

550 VOTE OF THANKS - EMMA FREEMAN

The Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked Emma Freeman, Head of People, ICT and Property Services for her support and professionalism. He wished her well and looked forward to her return in 2014.

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

Chairman
Date