

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER
2018, AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Boylan (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs R Cheswright, S Cousins,
M McMullen, P Ruffles and M Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

200 STAFF SURVEY: PRESENTATION

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided Members with a presentation on the results of the 2017 Staff Survey.

The Committee Chairman, on behalf of Members, thanked the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for her presentation. The Interim Head responded to a number of queries from Members.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

201 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Bull.

202 MINUTES - 25 JULY 2018

It was moved by Councillor S Cousins and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

203 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman drew Members' attention to a number of housekeeping issues in relation to the fire alarm, fire exits and the need to silence mobile devices and the unisex toilets located outside the Council Chamber.

204 SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE - ANNUAL LEAVE AUDIT

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted an update report by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) commissioned by the Chief Executive, to review the

implementation of the self-service annual leave recording process, its successes, issues raised and lessons learned.

The Head explained that the auditor had reported on a number of issues that arose during the implementation of the new HR and Payroll System (My View) and identified that Human Resources were already aware of or had resolved them.

The Audit highlighted the need for the training to be ongoing to provide continual support for the users and HR Officers continued to provide that necessary training. The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

205 ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report which set out employee absence levels, analysed short and long term sickness absence for the period April 2017 – March 2018 and which outlined current and proposed initiatives to reduce absence.

The Head stated that the Council's sickness absence in 2017/18 (6.1 days per FTE) was well below the national local authority average (8.1 days) and lower than the Council's target (6.5 days). This figure had increased slightly since the previous year (5.9 days in 2016/17).

The Council's short term sickness absence in 2017/18 (3.1 days per FTE) was significantly lower than the

Council's target (4.5 days). This figure had fallen since the previous year (3.2 days in 2016/17).

Members were advised that the 2017/18 long term sickness absence was 3.1 days per FTE which was well below the national local authority average of 4.1 days. This figure had increased slightly since the previous year and for the second year running had not met the Council's target for long term sickness.

The Interim Head stated that managers were supporting employees on long term sickness with counselling or referrals to Occupational Health and adjustments to their work/workplace to assist with returning to work. Members were advised that the most common reason (43% of absences) for long term sickness absence was due to acute medical conditions (e.g. stroke, heart attack or cancer).

The Chairman commented on the introduction of mental health first aiders. Councillor S Cousins referred to the benefits of a less stressful working environment. Councillor P Ruffles referred to the impacts of stress and long term conditions such as cancer on the mental health of Officers. The Committee Chairman also commented that, as short term sickness had not reached 4.0 FTE since 2013/14, the Council's target could be reduced from 4.5 days per FTE to 4.0 days.

Councillor Mrs R Cheswright proposed and Councillor S Cousins seconded, a motion that the Council should lower the short term sickness absence target to 4 days per FTE and therefore the target for total sickness

absence would be reduced to 6 days FTE. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the recommendations were declared CARRIED.

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

(B) the absence management target for short term sickness absence be reduced to 4 days per FTE and the total sickness absence target be reduced to 6 days per FTE.

206 ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted the results of the 2017/18 Annual Equalities Report. Members were advised that the Council's employee profile was broadly reflective of the local demographic.

The Interim Head stated that one area where the employee profile was not reflective was gender and age as the Authority had a considerably higher percentage of females than males when compared to the working population of East Hertfordshire. Members were advised however that this was common in the public sector.

The Interim Head stated that that there were no concerns with regard to leavers in terms of ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation but there was, however, a disproportionate percentage of male leavers when compared to the percentage of male employees although it had

reduced since last year.

The HR Officer advised that there had been a reduction in applicants from BAME groups being shortlisted from last year from 20 people (25% of BAME applicants) to 8 people (16% of BAME applicants). There were no concerns in other areas at the shortlisting stage and the principal concern was ensuring that the best candidates were appointed.

Councillor M Stevenson commented on the ratio of male and female employees and referred to administrative and customer services roles being mostly occupied by women. Councillor Mrs R Cheswright emphasised the importance of not over-analysing the annual equalities results.

Councillor M Stevenson proposed and Councillor S Cousins seconded, a motion that the 2017/18 annual equalities report be noted and the recommendations for 2018/19 be approved, as detailed in the report submitted. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the annual equalities report 2017/18 be noted; and

(B) the recommendations for 2018/19 be approved as detailed in the report submitted.

207 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS -
QUARTERLY REPORT

The Interim Head of Human Resources and

Organisational Development submitted a report inviting Members to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management Statistics for Quarter 2 (July to September 2018).

Members were advised that 70% of vacancies were actively being recruited to, 26% were on hold pending job redesign and potential review of structure and 4.3% were due to other reasons, such as being covered by other temporary arrangements or as an external secondment or via a shared service with Stevenage Borough Council.

The Interim Head advised that action was ongoing to fill vacant posts and employee turnover had reduced slightly in line with an ongoing annual trend as the year progressed. It was noted that HR Officers were putting considerable effort into contacting leavers to follow up the completion of exit questionnaires.

Members were advised that completion rates had increased from 42% in 2017/18 to 74% as at the end of Quarter 2 of 2018/19. The Interim Head stated that projected sickness absence for 2018/19 had been slightly lower at 5.9 days when compared to the same quarter in 2017/18 and had been below the Council's target of 6.5 days. This figure had, however, increased slightly since Quarter 1 when the figure had been 5.6 days.

The Interim Head responded to a small number of queries from Members. The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the HR Management Statistics for Quarter 2 (July to September 2018) be noted.

208 GENDER PAY - ACTION PLAN

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report that outlined the gender pay gap and detailed action plan following the publication of the Council's gender pay gap data in March 2018.

Members were advised that the Authority had conducted a review of job adverts to ensure that the language was gender neutral. Other actions included training on unconscious bias when shortlisting, interviewing and promoting flexible working in all full time job adverts. The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

209 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL - UPDATE

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report inviting Members to note the update. Members were advised of the timely and accurate delivery of the payroll service with no errors or queries from Officers or Members.

The Interim Head referred to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and advised that the GDPR action plan was almost complete with only minor issues outstanding.

Members were updated in respect of the 'You said, we did' initiative and the "Our Workspace" project. The Interim Head referred to the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders and the imminent review of the Flexi Time scheme. Members were updated in respect of Mandatory Training and in relation to a number of Health and Safety issues.

The Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the update report be noted.

210 HEALTH AND SAFETY MINUTES - 12 JUNE 2018

The Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on Thursday 12 June 2018 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018 be received.

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm

Chairman
Date