

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,  
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH  
2019, AT 3.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillors P Ruffles (Vice Chairman, in the  
Chair) S Bull, Mrs R Cheswright,  
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
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

447 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from the  
Chairman, Councillor P Boylan. It was noted that  
Councillor P Ruffles, Vice Chairman would be chairing  
the meeting.

448 MINUTES - 9 JANUARY 2019

The HR Officer explained that the Annual Report in July  
2019, would include further information in relation to

turnover and sickness with equalities issues being reported to Members in October, 2019.

Members commented that it would be useful to have a list of staff who were leaving and those who would be commencing their employment and that this could be included, without photographs, on the weekly Members' Information Bulletin. This was supported.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019 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 9 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 449 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor P Ruffles welcomed Mr Simon O'Hear as the new Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development to the meeting. The Head of HR and Organisational Development provided an overview of his role generally and specifically in relation to staff development and recruitment.

The Chairman referred to the need to consider the Pay Policy Statement before its submission to Council in May, 2019. The Head of HR and Organisational Development explained that the report could not be included for consideration at this meeting, as a further

meeting needed to be held on 20 March 2019 with Unison on the outcome of the pay proposals. Members supported the suggestion to consider the issue of an additional meeting under “Urgent Business”.

#### 450 HR AND PAYROLL UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report providing an update on what the HR and Payroll team had been working on. The Head of HR and Organisational Development provided a summary of the report, this included the installation of defibrillators at Wallfields and Hertford Theatre, the procurement of a new employee assistance programme (EAP), the launch of a buddy scheme for new starters and the recruitment process for the new Chief Executive.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources updated be noted.

#### 451 AGENCY STAFF AUDIT

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report following the agency staffing audit and associated action plan. He provided a summary of the final report and the main actions points for HR in relation to:

- Monitoring and review – acknowledgement of the 12 Week Rule;

- Agency staff renewal – the need to take a more active role in monitoring agency staff and to give consideration to making them permanent.
- Actions already undertaken by the HR team to address the points in the action plan which included proactively contacting managers when their agency staff were approaching 12 weeks employment and advising them what they needed to do and taking a report on agency staff to Leadership Team quarterly, to ensure a holistic view and assess value for money.
- In progress was the agency use and terms gathering exercise which would lead to the creation of a preferred suppliers list with negotiated terms to ensure better value for money.

In response to a query by Councillor R Cheswright, the Head of HR and Organisational Development explained that an employee could be made permanent, as a part time member of staff.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources updated be noted.

#### 452 APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMME

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report updating Members on the Council's apprenticeship programme. The Head of HR and Organisational Development provided a

summary of the report and explained how the apprenticeship levy was used to support the educational development of eight apprentices in a number of service areas across the council. The number of new apprentices taken on in 2018 was six.

In response to a query from Councillor R Cheswright, the Head of HR and Organisational Development explained the use of apprenticeships in relation to hard to recruit areas within the Council such as planning, environmental health and revenues and benefits, and the Council's role within the Hertfordshire Apprentice Alliance. He explained that the period of time to complete a course of study and an apprentice's length of stay with the Council, was usually around 18 months or 24 months depending on the level, adding that the current apprentices had great potential and one had been praised by the incoming Chief Executive for their support in recruiting a new Head of Service.

Members noted that the report had been produced at the request of the Chairman of HR Committee who wanted to ensure that both the Committee (and full council) via the Minutes, were sufficiently aware of the significant work and progress being done regarding apprentices.

The Head of HR and Organisational development outlined the key developments:

- HR represented East Herts Council at the HAA (Hertfordshire Apprenticeship Alliance between Hertfordshire local authorities, the four main colleges, Hertfordshire University, local business

and training providers. The aim of the alliance was to share knowledge, support, the development of apprenticeships and work towards keeping the levy funding with Hertfordshire.

- HR worked with the Hertfordshire Careers service supporting the schools work experience initiatives; encouraging young people to explore the range of opportunities available at the Council. It was noted that HR and Officers also attended careers fairs at Secondary Schools, Colleges, local businesses and Hertfordshire University. Some of the Careers fairs were specifically targeted to encourage young people to think about the opportunities available within hard to recruit areas, e.g. planning and Environmental Health. Members noted other events based around informing young people about the whole range of apprenticeships available and the services the Council offered, including career opportunities in a range of areas such as communications, media, finance and HR as well as more specific sectors such as Environmental Health and Planning.
- The Head of HR and Organisational Development advised that the Council worked with Oaklands College, as well as St Albans and Hertsmere Councils to help shape the content of the Town Planning apprenticeship qualification in 2016/17 to ensure it met current business needs; the programme continued to be used today.
- The Council was also part of a Cross County

Strategic Level Planning Group of all authorities which met regularly. The Head of HR and Organisational Development explained that it had been very challenging to combine the planning service in the same way that the Council had achieved with Building Control, but this was on the radar and would be advanced if the opportunity arose.

Councillor P Ruffles commented that he was keen to avoid the “silo” approach of Local Government in relation to the Hertfordshire Alliance.

The Head of HR and Organisational Development explained that the Council had adopted a “grow your own” approach to staff development and Officers were now visiting schools in an effort to demonstrate career opportunities within Local Government.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources updated be noted.

#### 453 FLEXIBLE WORKING

The Head of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report which had been considered and supported by the Local Joint Panel on 12 December 2018. The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the proposed key changes, as detailed. It was noted that the suite of HR policies were being reviewed to ensure that they were updated in line with legal requirements and best practice, were clear and

concise and made clear the role of HR, Managers and employees and made use of e-forms, where possible. Members supported the recommendations, as detailed.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor M Stevenson that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Flexible Working Scheme be approved;

(B) the Job-Share Policy be deleted.

#### 454 APPEALS POLICY

The Head of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report on a revised Appeals Policy which had been considered at the Local Joint Panel meeting on 12 December 2018. The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the key changes, as detailed.

It was moved by Councillor S Bull and seconded by Councillor R Cheswright that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the revised Appeals Policy, be approved.

#### 455 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS - QUARTERLY REPORT

The Head of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report setting out the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 4 (January – March 2019). The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the statistics and explained that the number of vacancies had fallen from 32 in Quarter 3 to 29 in Quarter 4.

Councillor R Cheswright sought and was provided with clarification as to why 62% of posts were on hold. Members noted that this could be as a result of job re-design, potential review of structure or other arrangements. It was also noted that nine of these posts were in planning with a similar situation in environmental health and that options were being reviewed. Councillor R Cheswright acknowledged that there had been a large turnover in planning during the last year.

Councillor M Stevenson referred to the long term sickness process. The Head of HR and Organisational Development referred to the generous levels of sick pay offered by the Council and the role of the Occupation Health Service in the employment process and when called upon in relation to an employee's long term sickness. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management statistics for Quarter 4 (January to March 2019) be noted.

456 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES 10 DECEMBER 2018

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The Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 10 December 2018 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2018, be received.

457 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman reminded Members that there was a need to consider the Pay Policy Statement in advance of its submission to Council in May 2019 and that this would necessitate an additional meeting of Human Resources Committee in April 2019.

The Head of HR and Organisational Development reminded Members that the report could not be included on the agenda of this meeting, as the pay proposals had yet to be considered by Unison, which would meet on 20 March 2019. Given reporting deadlines and key officer availability, Members agreed that an additional meeting of HR Committee be held on 10 April 2019 commencing at 2pm.

RESOLVED – that an additional meeting of Human Resources Committee be held on 10 April 2019 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....