

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 23
NOVEMBER 2022, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rosemary Bolton (Chairman)
Councillors A Alder, S Bull, J Dumont,
M McMullen, P Ruffles and R Buckmaster
(substitute for S Newton)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Democratic Services Officer
Peter Dickinson	- Health and Safety Officer
Elly Starling	- Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

246 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Newton. It was noted that Councillor R Buckmaster was substituting for Councillor Newton.

247 MINUTES - 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

It was moved by Councillor Alder and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 September 2022 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 of the Committee held on 21 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

248 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were rolling declarations of interest from Members of Parish/Town Councils which were receiving services from East Herts Council's Human Resources Department.

249 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members to use their microphones when speaking as the meeting was being webcasted.

250 HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REVIEW FOR QUARTER 2 - (JULY 2022 TO SEPTEMBER 2022)

The Health and Safety Officer introduced the report. He advised Members that there were no Minutes from the most recent Health and Safety Committee meeting on the agenda due to the close proximity of this meeting. He said that these Minutes would be

available at the next meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for his report and said that it was good to see that it contained only minor accidents.

Councillor Alder asked what would escalate a non-reportable accident to a reportable accident and enquired if any such accidents had been escalated. The Health and Safety Officer said that reportable accidents fell within a specified criterion, for example, the loss of a limb, a death, or a serious failure of a structure. He said that such accidents required the venue to complete and submit an online form to the Health and Safety Executive, which he would also be advised of. He said that to date there had been no such reportable accidents.

The Health and Safety Officer said that should it transpire that a minor accident was serious it would be escalated by the venue upon contact from the injured party. He said that in such circumstances the accident/event could be traced back via the venue's records, and again he would also be advised. He said that to date there had been no such escalations.

Councillor Ruffles said that he very much enjoyed reading the Health and Safety reports and that he had learnt much from them. He acknowledged the extra work which was being created by Hertford Theatre being closed, meaning that productions instead were being hosted by alternative venues such as Ware Drill Hall, and he thanked Officers for this.

Councillor Buckmaster asked if percentages could be used in the venue accident data, i.e. the number of accidents expressed as a percentage of a venue's footfall. The Health and Safety Officer said that he could enquire as to whether this was a possibility.

The Chairman said that it was good to see that the implementation of the new lone working provision continued, with several departments now having received devices and training. She also thanked the Health and Safety Officer for his report.

RESOLVED – that the Health and Safety Quarterly Review, Quarter Two, July 2022 – September 2022 be considered and received.

251 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS FOR QUARTER 2 (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022)

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report. She said that a verbal update would also be given regarding the recruitment and retention of staff within the Planning Department.

Councillor Dumont asked if recruitment for disabled applicants had progressed as discussed and minuted at the meeting of the Committee on 21 September 2022. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that due to the recent Council IT outage and Officer absence an update on this subject and the whole plan would be

forthcoming by the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Alder referred to paragraph 3.3.10 of the report and asked for clarification of how an employee could be long term absent from work for 'minor reasons'. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that long term absence from work was normally due to serious diseases or stress, but believed that the employee in question was suffering from a combination of several 'minor reason' complaints. She said that the department was working with this employee to try and get them back to work.

Councillor Bull said the Council's IT Communications were not good and gave an example of recently having to obtain a new password for his laptop. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that she would feed Councillor Bull's concerns back to the IT Department.

Councillor Dumont asked for further information about the 'How to Find Your Brave' workshops. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the workshop was part of a series, aimed at aiding participants' resilience, bravery and enabling them to say the things which they needed to say. She said that the fifth workshop had just been run and was very positively received, with videos also available to view on the intranet.

Councillor Dumont asked who had oversight of the Applicant Tracking System (ATS). The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

said that a Human Resources Officer had been allocated to each Council Department, with Human Resources Admin carrying out back-room ATS functions. She said that an end-to-end review of the Human Resources Department (including ATS, which was in its infancy) had been commissioned via Lean Six Sigma.

Councillor Dumont said that Lean Six Sigma was a powerful tool and asked if the Council had any expert Black Belts. The Health and Safety Officer said that at present there were no Black Belts within the organisation, but there were eight change champion practitioners, supported by the Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Operations that all qualified as Yellow belts before progressing to Green Belts.

The Health and Safety Officer explained to the Committee that Lean Six Sigma was a method which used collaborative team effort to improve performance by systematically removing waste and reducing variation. He gave examples of how challenging conventions could help organisations to deliver services with time and cost savings.

Councillor Buckmaster referred to the Equalities Monitoring Indicators included within the report and noted that although over 70% of the Council's employees were female, only 40% of the Leadership Team were female. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that all Councils were female heavy. She said that the Talent Management Scheme and the Future Manager Scheme were both programs which could help to increase the number of female staff in more senior

roles, adding that a Full Skills Audit was to be undertaken in the new year which would look at how an employee's previous job skills could be utilised in new Council roles.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the vacancies within the Planning Department continued to be a concern. She said that the Department was too reliant on temporary agency staff, with recent recruitment incentives proving unsuccessful. She added that these problems were country wide and not just an issue faced by East Herts.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that a campaign-based approach to recruit and retain Planning staff was now being taken, this included a separate Planning Department landing page on the internet with videos from the Head of Service. She said that the career grading which was previously removed from posts had been reintroduced, with an academy approach to learning and a copywriter had been engaged for job adverts.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that in addition it had been agreed in principle that Market Forces Supplements could be applied to Planning Department vacancies. The Chairman said that the use of Market Forces Supplements fell under Section 7 of the Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 which was approved by the Committee in February 2022.

Councillor Bull asked if Planning staff could be 'tied into' contracts to stop them being trained and then leaving the Council for jobs in the private sector. The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this was not possible (as even with a payback clause, staff could not be stopped from leaving). Exit interviews with staff did not indicate that all left employment with the Council for a higher salary. She said that it was important to look at the 'total package' of employment at the Council, including pensions, free car parking and a sense of belonging.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development gave Members a verbal update on the work of the Human Resources and Payroll Department since the last meeting of the Committee. This included:

- A review of the Corporate Induction Process, to include the assessment of job applications when received and engaging with any prospective employees before the closing date.
- Analysing the outcomes from completed Lean Six Sigma processes.
- The development of the Future Managers Programme.
- The development of the New Leadership Programme.
- The completion of the Payroll review, this was now being examined and reference workbooks were being compiled for staff as back up.
- Work completed by Payroll to enable staff pay rises and any backdated pay to be received in December 2022 pay.

- East Herts Together continues, this now incorporates Transforming East Herts.
- A review of the Human Resources support given to Broxbourne Council. Broxbourne have been advised that they need to recruit to their two vacant Human Resources posts, as East Herts can only trade services if they have capacity.

The Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this verbal update will be compiled and sent out to Members of the Committee by email.

The Chairman thanked the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development for her report and update.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter Two, July 2022 – September 2022 be considered and received.

252 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

Chairman
Date

