

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2019,
AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor A Ward-Booth

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Vicki David	- Human Resources Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

57 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor S Bull, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 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 10 April 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Although not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Councillors R Bolton, S Newton and P Ruffles declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Human Resources and Payroll Team Update Report) by virtue of the fact they were also Members of Hertford Town Council.

59 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to a number of housekeeping issues in relation to the Fire Alarms, exits and public conveniences.

60 ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a revised policy on behalf of the Head of the ICT Strategic Partnership Manager which provided guidance to all ICT users on the boundaries of acceptable usage of ICT equipment and systems. The Head of HR explained that the report had been updated following a number of recommendations from the Local Joint Panel who had also asked that the policy should be included for circulation in the Members' Information Bulletin.

Councillor P Ruffles suggested that minor changes be made to the wording in paragraphs 6.1 and 7.1 to clarify matters. This was supported.

The Committee approved the report, as amended.

It was moved by Councillors A Alder and seconded by Councillor M McMullen that the Acceptable Usage Policy, as amended, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Acceptable Usage Policy, as amended, be approved.

61 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report on what HR and the Payroll team had been working on. He provided a summary of the report.

In response to a query from Councillor A Alder, the Head of HR provided an update in relation to the locations of the defibrillators generally and explained why a defibrillator had not been provided at the Council's Offices at Charrington's House, Bishop's Stortford. He agreed to provide an update to Members regarding their specific locations and would raise the issue of funding for a further defibrillator in Bishop's Stortford, with Leadership Team. The Head of HR also agreed to provide Members with a schedule of when staff would be moved out of Charrington's House.

In response to a query from Councillor M McMullen, the Head of HR explained the role of the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) in relation to health and safety audit.

The Head of HR and Organisational Development provided

a summary of the new pay award which had been rolled from 1 April 2019 and the challenges this had posed for Officers.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to the HR and Payroll team for their hard work in effecting the new changes.

Councillor P Ruffles referred to the HR support given by the Council to Hertford Town Council and felt that he should declare a (non-pecuniary) interest as he was a Member of the Town Council. Councillors R Bolton and S Newton also wished their (non-pecuniary) interest be recorded as they were also Members of the Town Council.

The Head of HR explained that East Herts Council had supported Hertford Town Council in terms of HR support for a number of years and that there were no proposals to provide such support to other town or parishes.

The Committee noted the report, as detailed.

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

(B) the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development:

- provide Members with an update regarding the specific locations of defibrillators and to raise the issue of funding a further one in Bishop's Stortford with the Leadership Team;
- provide Members with a schedule concerning the closure of Charrington's House, Bishop's Stortford.

62 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report which considered employee absence levels, causes, and trends in other public sector organisations and outlined the Council's current and proposed initiatives to improve employee health and wellbeing.

In response to a query by Councillor P Ruffles in relation to the "work rate of individuals" in terms of the delivery of outcomes, the Head of HR explained that no such parameters were placed on staff, but that staff were placed in positions which played to their strengths and were supported with training.

Councillor A Alder asked that Members be provided with how many staff had recognised disabilities. The Head of HR undertook to provide Members with information which may have been provided on their equalities form at the time of their application.

The Head of HR explained the challenges in relation to long term absences and especially when a member of staff might be ill because of stress. He explained that Officers were reviewing sickness and absence procedures at the moment. The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with clarification in relation to short term absences.

In response to a query from Councillor J Dumont, the Head of HR explained the Council's policy on sickness payments which he said, was on a par with other public sector organisations such as, education, health, charities and local

government.

The Committee Chairman sought and was provided with further information in relation to the role Mental First Aiders, how these volunteers were supported and the role of HR in co-ordinating the process generally and their training.

The Committee Chairman commented on the many good initiatives provided by the Council.

The Committee approved the report, as detailed.

It was moved by Councillor A Alder and seconded by Councillor S Newton that the report as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

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

(B) the Council's absence management targets be changed to reflect the decision made by HR Committee on 3 October 2018 to reduce the short term target from 4.5 days to 4 days per FTE and for the long term absence target to remain as 2 days (thereby reducing the overall absence target to 6 days) with effect from 1 April 2019.

63 HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report summarising the results of the Health and Safety Audit and associated Action Plan. The Head of HR provided an outline of the background to

the audit which had been completed by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS).

The Committee Chairman queried training for Members in relation to health and safety. The Head of HR explained that this was provided on-line and that a number of “e”-learning platforms were being set up and an update would be provided within an annual report to Members.

The Committee approved the report, as detailed.

It was moved by Councillor J Dumont and seconded by Councillor S Newton that the report as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Health and Safety Audit report and associated Action Plan be noted; and

(B) The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provide a quarterly safety report to Members in October 2019 with a detailed Annual Report provided at the January 2020 meeting of Human Resources Committee.

64 TURNOVER REPORT

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report which set out the turnover rate for 2018/19 and outlined recommendations for 2019/20. The Head of HR provided a summary of the report.

Councillor M McMullen expressed concern about the targets and queried the basis for increasing the targets

from 10% to 15%. The Head of HR explained that the figures were not currently in line with national figures and questioned whether there was a need to have a turnover figure.

Councillor S Newton raised the issue of exit questionnaires and said that she felt that it would be useful to see and evaluate why people were “coming and going”. She raised concerns about a loss of continuity and historical information if staff left after a short period of time. The Head of HR acknowledged this concern, adding that it was about achieving the correct balance to grow the organisation.

The Committee Chairman raised the issue of the Staff Survey. The HR Officer confirmed that this would next take place in 2020. In response to a possible correlation between the highest turnover rate and the highest absence, the Head of HR confirmed that there was no correlation.

The Committee Chairman raised the issue of recruitment costs and obtaining value for money. The Head of HR updated Members on the various social media platforms which were used to advertise posts. He hoped to achieve economies by centralising the recruitment budget.

It was moved by Councillor P Ruffles and seconded by Councillor R Bolton that option (ii) that turnover targets be removed and to monitor these against wider benchmarks and more local benchmarks directly sourced. i.e. with other local district Councils be supported. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

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

(B) turnover targets be removed and that they monitored against wider benchmarks and more local benchmarks directly sourced i.e. other local district Councils.

65 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS -
QUARTERLY REPORT

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a report setting the HR Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April –June 2019). The HR Officer explained that the projected turnover was 14.6%.

The Committee noted the report, as detailed.

RESOLVED – that the HR Management Statistics for Quarter 1: (9 April – June 2019) be noted.

66 MEMBER TRAINING

The lead officer for Scrutiny and Member Development submitted a report summarising the 2018/19 provision of Member training and development of events. The report provided an overview of the broader approach to Member development including the 2019/20 induction and a summary of the roll-out of Member induction, training and development. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided a summary of the report.

Councillor A Ward-Booth referred to the training provided by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) which he

considered was expensive and queried whether value for money was evaluated in terms of the training by external providers. The Head of IT explained that external providers had certain areas of specialism. Councillor Ward-Booth queried whether value for money vs cost could be reported back to Members and especially if training was particularly good. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to speak with the Lead Officer for Member Development and Scrutiny in this regard.

Councillor A Alder referred to Members who might agree to initially attend, then who did not and the impact this could have in terms of demonstrating value for money.

Councillor J Dumont referred to meeting etiquette and protocols, such as knowing when to ask questions and queried about such training provision. The Democratic Services Officer undertook to refer this issue to the Lead Officer for Scrutiny and Member Development.

RESOLVED – that the report as detailed be noted.

67 LOCAL JOINT PANEL - MINUTES OF THE MEETING: 5 JUNE 2019

The Minutes of the Local Joint Panel meeting held on 5 June 2019 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 be received.

68 SAFETY COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF THE MEETING: 18 MARCH 2019

In response to a query, the Head of Human Resources and

Organisational Development explained the “man down” function referred to in paragraph 3.1 and in relation to lone workers.

Although not part of the Safety Committee Minutes, Councillor A Alder referred to the East Herts Social Prescribing Project and the fact that Kathrine Foy had won Hertfordshire County Council’s Dr Joan Crawley Award 2019 for Public Health Excellence and to Mehkola Ray in relation to the “Forever Active” Programme. The Chairman, on behalf of Members, asked that the Committee’s thanks be passed to the Officers.

The Minutes of the Safety Committee meeting held on 18 March 2019 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2019 be received.

69 URGENT BUSINESS

With the consent of Members, the Chairman agreed to take an urgent item of business in relation to the appointment of a Vice Chairman of Human Resources Committee, in order to facilitate the business of the Council.

It was moved by Councillor M McMullen and seconded by Councillor S Newton that Councillor P Ruffles be appointed Vice Chairman for the civic year 2019/20. After being put to the meeting and a vote carried, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor P Ruffles be appointed Vice Chairman of Human Resources Committee for

the civic year 2019/20.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman

Date