

Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 26th January, 2017.

Present:- Councillors Usmani (Chair), N Holledge (Vice-Chair), Bedi, Brooker, Chahal, Davis, M Holledge, R Sandhu and Sharif

Apologies for Absence:- None

PART 1

22. Declarations of Interest

None.

23. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th October 2016

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October, 2016, be approved as a correct record.

24. Temporary Agency Staff - Progress on Implementation and Baseline Monitoring

The Officer apologised that the report was not available for discussion and advised that it would be considered at the next meeting on 12th April, 2017.

25. Establishment of Appointments Sub Committee

The Senior Democratic Services Officer outlined a report in which the Committee was requested to agree to the establishment of an Appointments Sub Committee and the appointment of Members to serve on it.

Members were reminded that the Constitution provided for the Committee to appoint an Appointments Sub Committee as required should the need arise, for the Appointment to the post of Chief Executive. The Sub Committee comprised five members, appointed in accordance with the political proportionality of the Council (currently 5 Labour, 1 Conservative). All five members would be voting members of the Sub Committee.

It was noted that Members of the Sub Committee must comprise (subject to availability) the Leaders of the political groups, or their nominees, who must have had appropriate training in recruitment and selection activities. Where possible but not as a requirement the nominations should be drawn from members serving on the Employment and Appeals Committee.

The Appointments Sub Committee would be supported by Human Resources and, where appropriate, an external adviser.

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Nominations had been sought from Political Groups and were notified to the Committee. The Senior Democratic Services Officer questioned whether there were any other nominations and none were submitted.

Resolved-

- a) That the Appointments Sub-Committee be appointed for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.
- b) That the terms of reference of the Sub Committee be as set out in Paragraph 5.7 of the report.
- c) That seats be allocated on the Sub-Committee as set out in paragraph 5.5 of the report.
- d) That Councillors Chahal, Hussain, Munawar, Sharif and Usmani be appointed to the Appointments Sub-Committee.

26. Staff Wellbeing Update

The Officer advised that the report would be provided for the next meeting when all the outstanding information would be available.

27. Staff Survey Results Update

The Organisational Development/ HR Business Partner, outlined a report and presentation, to update the Committee on the results of the Staff Survey which was carried out in the Autumn of 2016. She presented apologies from the Assistant Director of Adult Social Care who was unable to attend the meeting and advised that she would feed back Member comments to him.

It was highlighted that the survey was only for Slough BC staff and included library staff and a small number of Cambridge Education staff who had returned to the Council. The survey did not cover staff from partner organisations such as the Slough Childrens Services Trust.

It was noted that the survey was run by the employee engagement forum and administered using Survey Monkey. It was structured around four key themes: employee voice, organisational integrity (living out the council's values), strategic direction (the council's vision and direction) and management. The purpose of the survey was to assess the level of employee engagement across the council, highlight successes and identify areas for improvement. Plans were being drawn up by the employee engagement forum, directorate SMTs and senior leadership to take actions forward in response to the survey results.

The Officer discussed the Key findings of the survey and comparisons with previous results. Members were advised that an overall response rate of 60%

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was achieved, compared to 42% in 2015, being a good return rate for an optional survey.

The Committee noted some of the top line results which included that 88 percent of staff enjoyed their job, 56 percent of staff felt appreciated by managers, and 90 percent of staff rated the council as average or above as an employer. More than 1,700 individual comments were received and the employee engagement forum was analysing and responding to these. The forum was also updating the council-wide employee engagement plan for 2017/18 to address some survey findings. Additionally the management team for each directorate will be looking at the results for their own area and developing directorate level action plans.

The Committee was advised that an update on actions would be provided at the annual staff conference in May, 2017, organised by the employee engagement forum.

The Officer gave a comprehensive presentation which discussed the responses given to the questionnaire.

Members raised a number of questions and opinions which included the following:

- *57 individuals had skipped Questions 8 to 11, 89 had skipped Questions 12 to 14. Was there a likely reason for this? Could it be that the questions were too complex or the staff member had lost interest?*
The Officer would provide a response to Members prior to the next meeting.
- *A Member questioned whether an annual survey failed to address changes in attitudes throughout the year. Could a more responsive method be found such as an ongoing 'smiley face' podium within staff teams?*
The Officer advised that she would take this suggestion back to the Employee Forum for consideration.
- *It was suggested that there should be a staff behaviour charter.*
Members were advised that this would be embedded through the recruitment and appraisal processes.
- *A Member advised that in some cases she was aware that staff one to ones and appraisals were not carried out frequently enough.*
The Officer advised that these would be embedded in Service Plans.
- *Question 17 related to staff being recognised and appreciated for the work they do. A Member noted that 77% of staff felt appreciated by colleagues but this percentage dropped to 56% when it related to appreciation by Managers. It was requested that this concern be reviewed by Senior Management and a response be provided detailing how this position could be improved upon.*
The Officer advised that she would refer this to the Assistant Director for response.

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- *Responses to Question 18 had indicated that 35% of staff felt they were provided the correct amount of information about council projects and changes. Why was this so low?*
The Committee was advised that this had improved on last year (31%) and the trend was improving through better communication.
- *Survey results for Question 19 related to staff perception of how their Manager supported, listened to them and treated them fairly. Positive responses were in the range of 69 percent and 76 percent. A Member requested that work be done to analyse further the reasons behind these statistics to ensure that there was a focus on what appeared to be unhappy staff.*
Members were advised that in particular, the Senior Leadership Team had done work to improve their visibility and listen to staff. It was also noted that a high number of staff had skipped this question and this would be addressed as a concern.
- *Question 21 had addressed a number of miscellaneous questions such as workplace facilities and staff contractual issues. A Member asked whether measures were in place to enable staff to work from home.*
The relevant Commissioner advised that there was an ongoing project to look at IT equipment needs for homeworking, document management and IT Transformation.
- *A Member requested further information to be provided on the Honoraria process as she was concerned to learn that in some cases, good staff were recommended for an honoraria but then their application was rejected.*
The Officer advised that she was not aware of this but would provide further information on the process for Committee Members.
- *Question 11: It was noted that 58% of staff had stated that their experience had not improved whilst working for Slough BC. This was a new question but was a closed one and very broad, giving little insight into the reasons behind the responses. Could more information be provided?*
The Officer advised that she would refer this to the Assistant Director for response.
- *A Member asked whether the Staff Counselling Service was still in existence as she had not seen it advertised around Council Offices and it appeared that it was no longer being promoted. This was an important service for staff.*
It was confirmed that the Service was still available and the Officer would confirm how it was currently being publicised.

The Committee thanked the Officer for her presentation

Resolved- That the report be noted and that the Officer provide responses to Members by email, prior to the next meeting.

28. Pay Policy Statement 2017/ 2018

Surjit Nagra, Organisational/ HR Business Partner, outlined a report providing the Pay Policy Statement for the year 2017/18.

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The Committee was reminded that under the Localism Act 2011, Local Authorities were required to prepare an annual pay policy statement, which would cover a number of matters concerning the pay of the authority's staff, principally Chief Officers.

The Statement would be recommended to Full Council in February, 2017, for approval.

Once approved the statement will be published on the Council's website.

Members noted that the statement did not apply to schools' staff as local authority schools' employees were outside the scope of the legislation.

The statement covered a number of areas such as transparency, the remuneration of Chief Officers, reporting lines, expenses for travel and subsistence and the payment of honoraria.

The Officer advised that the annual salary for employees on the lowest grade, assuming that the posts are full-time, (excluding apprentices) was Level 1, £15,858. The pay of the Chief Executive was currently £159,054, being 10.3 times the pay of the lowest paid employees.

In the ensuing debate, Members asked a number of questions including:

- It was noted that the Interim Monitoring Officer was paid £650 per day for two days each week. How long would this continue?
The Interim Chief Executive advised that measures were being taken to appoint to the post permanently.
- Did the role of Monitoring Officer include legal work?
Members were advised that the responsibilities of the role did not include general legal work- this was carried out by staff in the Legal Department. It was however preferable that the Officer. had experience in a legal background. It would also be necessary to appoint a Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Resolved- That the Pay Policy Statement 2017/2018 be recommended to Council.

29. Members Attendance Record

Resolved- That the Members Attendance Record be noted.

30. Date of Next Meeting - 12th April 2017

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 12th April, 2017

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)