

Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 11th April, 2018.

Present:- Councillors Sarfraz (Chair), N Holledge (Vice-Chair), Bedi, Brooker and Qaseem (from 7.04pm)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Swindlehurst

PART 1

34. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

35. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th January 2018

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2018 be approved as a correct record.

36. Learning and Development Policy and Procedure

The Head of Organisational Development introduced a report that sought approval for a new Learning & Development Policy and Procedure for Council employees.

The policy aimed to make the Council an employer of choice to both assist employees reach their full potential and contribute to the achievement of the authority's strategic objectives. It had been developed following extension consultation with unions, managers and the Employee Engagement Forum. There was dual responsibility for the organisation to support employees with their learning needs and on staff to take personal responsibility for upskilling. The performance management process was outlined that included regular one-to-ones, six-month reviews and an annual appraisal that included a personal development plan for each employee that identified their training needs. The policy included fines to departments for staff who did not attend training as well as buddying and mentoring schemes to support employee development. National Learning at Work week would provide an opportunity to share and promote the policy widely across the Council.

Members discussed employee engagement and the issue of employees not attending booked training. Officers explained the steps that were taken to address such issues and the Committee emphasised the importance of engaging staff in the process. The mechanisms to gather feedback from training provided was raised and Members suggested using modern, digital and engaging ways to collate views and responses. Members welcomed the approach that was being taken and encouraged cross-departmental working, for example through buddying and mentoring, to break down perceived barriers in the Council.

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At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee approved the new Learning and Development Policy and Procedure.

Resolved – That the Learning and Development Policy and Procedure, as at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

37. Actions Speak Louder... Programme - Interim Update

The Head of Organisational Development provided an interim update to the Committee on the Actions Speak Louder... mandatory training programme. All staff had been required to undertake the interactive sessions delivered by the Garnett Foundation and the last session had been held on 29th March.

Members asked about the staff response to the programme and it was noted that 98% of participants fully or partly understood the importance of following the SBC values. The initial feedback highlighted issues including the accessibility of line management, value of the appraisal system and cross working between Council departments. An evaluation of the programme would be undertaken to inform an action plan. It was agreed that the Committee would consider the action plan at the next meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the interim update on the Actions Speak Louder...programme be noted.
- (b) That the Committee receive a further report at the next meeting on the evaluation of the programme and the action plan.
- (c) That it be noted that the Garnett Foundation's professional actors would perform a short sketch at the staff conference on April 26 to demonstrate the impact of changed behaviour on others.

38. Temporary Agency Staff Progress on Implementation and Baseline Monitoring

The Committee received a report on temporary agency staff. It was noted that the full year figures to the end of March 2018 were not yet available and this would be provided at a later date.

Information previously requested by Members in relation to the number of placements exceeding two years in the Chief Executive's department was provided as was an initial analysis of the net cost of using agency staff against existing staffing budgets. It was estimated that agency costs were approximately 18% higher than they would have been if existing staff had been used although further detailed work would be needed to complete this analysis. Members were also reminded that agency staff were often the most appropriate option in a number of instances such as one off projects or to cover sick leave. The Committee noted the initial estimate of net costs and it

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was agreed that a more detailed analysis would be considered when the work had been completed.

Members also discussed the steps in place to continue to reduce spend on agency staff and it was responded that the right actions were in place across the Council, however, the figures could rise in future reports for reasons including the staffing model inherited by the Direct Services Organisation delivering the Environmental Services Contract where temporary cover was an important operational requirement.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the report was noted and it was agreed to receive further information on the Quarter 4 position and net cost in due course.

Resolved –

- (a) That the update be noted.
- (b) The further information be circulated on the Matrix placements to the Fourth Quarter of 2017-18 and the net cost of temporary agency staff.

39. Implementation of Self Service Elements of the Financial and Human Resources System - Agresso

The Service Lead, People introduced a report on the progress of the introduction of the self service function on the financial and human resources system known as Agresso.

The HR self service elements had gone 'live' for staff on 1st April 2018 and enabled employees to carry out a range of functions such as booking leave, submitting expenses, receiving payslips and reporting sickness through the online system. The benefits included reduced paperwork and processing costs, and the provision of real time information and management reports on a range of issues. There had been a significant investment in training for all staff to ensure the system was introduced as smoothly as possible and a range of resources were available to employees and managers to provide the necessary ongoing support.

(Councillor Qaseem joined the meeting)

The initial feedback from staff had been positive and the number of calls to the helpdesk was in line with expectations and was already reducing. In response to a question it was noted that only staff that had undertaken the training had been given access to the system. There had been some glitches identified during the first two weeks of implementation, which was to be expected, although the Committee was assured that the issues were being addressed and it was considered that the introduction had been successful overall. Phase 2 of the programme would include consideration of using online tools for other HR services such as appraisals and a further report would be brought to the Committee in the future.

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A Member queried the Council policy of providing VAT receipts for fuel when submitting mileage claims as practice varied in different organisations. The Service Lead People and Director of Finance & Resources agreed to take the necessary formal advice from to clarify the Council position and update Members accordingly.

Resolved –

- (a) That the update on the implementation of the self service elements of the Agresso system be noted.
- (b) That the Committee receive a report at a future meeting on Phase 2 of the HR elements of the Agresso system.

40. Members' Attendance Record

Resolved – That the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

41. Date of Next Meeting - 19th June 2018

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 19th June 2018.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.32 pm and closed at 7.17 pm)