

## **Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 24th January, 2019.**

**Present:-** Councillors Brooker (Chair), Chaudhry (Vice-Chair), B Bains, Bedi, N Holledge, Hussain, Sabah (6.55 pm) and Sarfraz

**Apologies:-** None.

### **PART 1**

#### **21. Declarations of Interest**

None

#### **22. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd October 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **23. The Slough Academy - Update**

The Committee considered an update on the Slough Academy project and progress that had been made since October 2018.

The Academy had been launched in November 2018 with a comprehensive internal and external communication programme. Internally 30 members of staff had volunteered to act as Champions for the Academy, Project Board Members had briefed their managers on the Academy to enable cascade to their teams and a dedicated website page had been provided on the intranet. Externally a press release had been issued 'growing our own talent'.

An appointment had been made to the Slough Academy Manager post and a second Apprentice Specialist would be recruited in January 2019 to provide additional resource to speed up the rollout of Apprenticeships across the Council.

Two out of the Council's twelve maintained schools and nurseries were in the initial stages of investigating using their levy. The Academy was working with the Children, Learning and Skills Directorate to engage with schools in Apprenticeship Forums.

Implementation of the Apprenticeship e-Portfolio and Talent System (TMS) was on schedule.

During 2019 the Academy would focus on 6 work streams:

- Operating Model – continuing to build a solid infrastructure
- Supporting technology
- Phase 1 Apprenticeships
- Phase 2 Continuous Professional Development
- Phase 3 Succession Planning

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- Benefits Realisation.

The first group of existing staff in Adult Social Care would commence Apprenticeship Training Programmes during January and February and work had commenced on Wave One Apprenticeships.

In discussing the report members were advised that it was too soon to estimate how many apprenticeships could be provided to external applicants. It was agreed that the advert for the vacancy would be circulated to Committee members to assist in the widest circulation of it as possible.

Members of the Committee thanked officers for the report and the progress that had been made with the Academy.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### **24. Employment Policies & Procedures**

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to a number of amended and updated HR Policies and Procedures:

#### **New managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure**

This Policy and Procedure aims to maximise employee attendance whilst recognising that there are occasions when employees may be unable to attend work due to their own ill health.

The Policy had been revised to include:

- A clause on Data Protection Regulations 2018;
- Strengthening of the disability advice and guidance to reflect feedback from the Disability Forum ;
- A new Health and well-being section added to highlight the Council's commitment to protecting the health, safety and well being of our employees ;
- In respect of triggering the absence procedure, in addition to absence totalling 6 or more days in the previous 6 months, 3 separate instances of absence in a 6 month period has also been added as a trigger;
- Authority to manage formal meetings, with the exception of the dismissal stage, under this procedure is delegated to line managers;
- Emphasis on the responsibilities of managers and employees in monitoring, reporting and recording sickness absence on Agresso.

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### Revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

The Policy had been amended to enhance and update it and reflect changes to the safeguarding requirements. A Safer Recruitment Guide – “Recruiting to posts working with children, young adults or adults at risk” and the National Safeguarding Statutory and Legislative Requirements had both been incorporated into the policy. Members were advised that the Children’s Safeguarding (S11) Strategic Leads Group had been consulted to ensure Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding requirements for Section 11 are now met.

### Secondment Policy.

A minor amendment had been made to reflect recent learning from casework and to provide more clarity in the application of this policy. The following had been added to Section 11;

“Secondments are temporary in nature and the employee should not expect it to continue past the expiry date outlined in the agreement. However if a decision is made to recruit to the position on a permanent basis the permanent position should be appointed to following a recruitment and selection process in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. The seconded employee may apply for the position and will be considered equally with any other applicants”.

Members were advised that the Trades Unions, SLT including CMT, the Employee Engagement Forum, Corporate Consultation Forum and the Disability Forum had been consulted on the amended policies.

Implementation would include various methods of communication including; Newsround, HRBP’s to provide update at Senior Management Team Meetings and HR Policy update briefings.

**Resolved:** That the new, revised and updated policies and procedures outlined in the report be approved.

## 25. Progress on Implementation of the NJC Pay Award 2019/2020

The Committee received a report detailing progress made on the implementation of the pay award for 2019/2020, which introduced a new pay spine to be implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. A replacement for page 103 of the agenda – Pay spine and pay levels 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 was tabled.

Members were advised that this had been initiated to address lowest paid workers pay levels however Slough already paid SCP 9 which was above the proposed starting SCP 6.

A working group consisting of Trades Unions, Finance and HR had worked through the key considerations of implementing the pay spine and the key areas of agreement were set out in the report. There was no ‘cost neutral’

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option of implementing the new pay scale and finance would be determining the exact increase in costs. A draft collective agreement had been circulated to the Trade Unions for agreement. Members were advised that a further report on the implementation of the new pay spine would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

### **26. Temporary Agency Staff - Progress on Implementation and Baseline Monitoring**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the Council's spend on Temporary Agency Staff contracts via Matrix for quarter 3 of 2018/19.

Members were advised that the increase in spend detailed in the report did not reflect the actions taken to date to reduce spend on interims particularly reduced hours over the Christmas period. A more accurate picture would be produced for the next report. The increase in spend had largely been due to unavoidable reliance on interims in hard to fill roles and the challenges presented by the talent pool because of Slough's location.

Members were concerned over the length of time some interim staff were employed for particularly when covering established posts and requested further information on all placements over a year in order to consider value for money, value added, accountability and performance matters

**Resolved:** That the report to the next meeting (10 April) include:

- reasons for agency/interim staff placements over a year;
- the action being taken to transfer the agency placement/interim to permanent staff;
- the cost differential between the agency/interim placement and salaried staff;

### **27. Pay Policy Statement Update 2019/20**

The Committee received a report on the revisions to the Pay Policy Statement for the years 2019/20.

Members were advised that the Pay Policy Statement had been reviewed and updated to ensure it met the requirements of the Localism Act. The Statement would be approved by Council in February 2019 and would be updated in April when the cost of living award was implemented and published.

**Recommended** – That the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 be approved.

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**28. Attendance Record**

Noted

**29. Date of Next Meeting - 10th April 2019**

Noted - 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)