

Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 18th June, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Bains (Chair), Bedi (Vice-Chair), Brooker (from 7pm), Chaudhry (from 6.40pm), N Holledge, Akram, Mohammad and Smith

Apologies for Absence:- None

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th April 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2019 be approved as a correct record.

3. Appointment of Sub-Committees

The Head of Democratic Services presented a report that sought appointments to the Appeals Sub-Committee and the Appointments Sub-Committee.

The allocation of seats to the sub-committees had been calculated to reflect group membership and the political proportionality of the Council.

Resolved –

- (a) That the following Members be appointed to the Appeals Sub-Committee for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year: Councillors Davis, M Holledge, Plenty, Rasib and Smith. Deputies – Councillors Sadiq and Bains.
- (b) That the following Members be appointed to the Appointments Sub-Committee for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year: Councillors Bains, Hussain, Mann, Strutton and Swindlehurst.
- (c) That the Terms of Reference of the sub-committees be approved as set out in Appendix A of the report.
- (d) That Members be appointed to serve on the sub-committees in accordance with the wishes expressed by political groups in respect of seats allocated to them as set out in paragraph 5.2 of the report.

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4. Wellbeing - Update

Note – Upon a request from the Service Lead, People, the Committee agreed to consider agenda Item 6 Wellbeing – Update, as the next item of the meeting, followed by agenda Items 5,4,7 and 8.

The Public Health Programme Officer presented a report detailing the Council's Public Health Active Movement Programme which was an integral part of the Council's Transformation Programme and Wellbeing Initiative.

Members were advised that the underlying causes of obesity and inactivity were complex and reflected wider social factors, such as income, education and access to outdoor space. Active Movement was Public Health's holistic behavioural change programme aimed at reducing levels of sedentary behaviour and tackling inactivity, which were key contributors to obesity and premature mortality. Active Movement had been commissioned in late 2017 as a pilot involving two children's centres, five primary schools and two secondary schools, to explore how the Council could holistically engage with pupils, teachers and families to highlight the importance of physical activity and the negative health consequences of extended periods of sitting.

Following successful integration in the pilot schools, Public Health had re-commissioned Active Movement to deliver the intervention across the majority of Slough's primary schools. Public Health and People Services had also been working together to raise the profile of Active Movement through briefing sessions to the Council's workforce.

(Councillor Chaudhry joined the meeting at 6.40 pm)

There was some discussion in relation to all Members becoming champions of Active Movement. In response, the Public Health Programme Officer agreed to provide an information briefing session to all Members.

Resolved -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Active Movement Programme be endorsed.
- (c) That the Public Health Programme Officer provide a briefing session to all Members regarding the Active Movement Programme.
- (d) That the Employment and Appeals Committee Members act as champions to advocate the Active Movement Programme within the Members community.

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5. The Slough Academy - Update

The Committee considered an update report regarding The Slough Academy project and the progress made since the last report was received in January 2019.

Members were advised that there were currently 12 Council employees undertaking apprenticeships in Adult Social Care, Procurement, Operational Management and Community Sport and Health. Quarter 1 2019 currently showed apprenticeships being planned up to the end of 2024. The number of apprenticeships were expected to peak at 47 in early 2020 and ranged from GCSE to MA levels across Adult Social Care, Early Years, Customer Service, Civil Engineering, Surveying Technician, Town Planning, Regulatory Compliance, Procurement, Human Resources and Accounting. Quarter 2 would extend the roll-out from July 2019 onwards.

The Committee was informed that the recent Schools Forum meeting held in May 2019 had an excellent attendance with over 16 maintained and non-maintained Slough schools attending. Support was provided by Service Leads from People Services, Finance and the Account Manager for apprenticeships from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Feedback from the schools had been very positive and it was hoped there would be an increase in the number of apprenticeships throughout schools in Slough.

In relation to Phase 2 – Continuous Professional Development, Members were advised that the Council was due to implement a market-leading Talent Management System – ‘Cornerstone’ with two modules for learning management and performance management. The system would provide the Council with the ability to develop a new approach to continuous professional development to build on the foundations established through the apprenticeship roll-out. The system would provide a clearly defined career pathway for all staff with established organisational support through the integration of appraisals and Personal Development Plans.

The implementation of succession planning would ensure that the Council had a pipeline of talent in place to fill the next generation of roles required to support the delivery of future Service Plans. The Cornerstone Performance Management module would assist managers and leaders in the Council to proactively identify potential emerging talent based on formal performance criteria. This would ensure that staff were continually encouraged to develop and progress their careers and this would contribute to retention levels by ensuring the workforce was motivated to support the organisation’s Service Delivery Plans.

Members were keen to support the growth and continuous professional development of the Council’s workforce.

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(Councillor Brooker joined the meeting at 7 pm)

There was some discussion in relation to the Council providing work experience to students. The Director of Finance and Resources reported that there was no government funding available to the Council to provide work experience. In addition, he explained that historically these types of opportunities had not been well structured for the students and involved diverting staff resource to provide supervision. He explained that providing work experience was not a priority of the Council and the organisation was currently unable to support this provision.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report detailing the Council's spend on temporary agency staff contracts via Matrix.

The Service Lead Governance apologised to the Committee that the information requested at the previous meeting had been omitted from the report. He assured Members that the requested information would be provided in the report presented at the next meeting in October 2019.

Members were advised that the Council's spend on interims, as identified from the Matrix spend report between 1st April and 31st May 2019 was £1,515,343. Spend through the Council's Agresso payments system for the same period was £381,427. There were currently 270 interims employed and this represented an increase of 20 from the figure previously reported to the Committee in April 2019. It was noted that the Full Time Equivalent details had been included in the report, however as this was calculated on hours and timesheets, the data was incomplete. Members were advised that fuller details would be provided in the report at the next meeting.

The OD/HR Business Partner explained that there were two categories of interim: project workers and cover roles. Project workers were often used to provide specialist skills for time limited contracts and tended to be on higher contract rates. Cover role interims were used where there was a resource need and it had proved difficult to attract suitably qualified people to the role. The aim was to convert cover roles to permanent employees.

There was some discussion in relation to spend for both Matrix and 'off contract' spends. The Matrix contract had been successful in controlling and improving governance around departmental engagement of agency staff and in reducing maverick spend. However, the introduction of identified 'off-contract' spend gave a picture of increasing costs. Spend for both Matrix and

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'off-contract' for the financial year (18/19) totalled £13.4 million. Members were advised that work with the Finance department would continue to ensure that coding to agency and consultant cost codes were accurate. Spend outside the Matrix arrangement would continue to be monitored and challenged to ensure placements were in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Resolved –

(a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the report to the next meeting of the Committee include:

- A breakdown of figures for interims employed to work on special projects as opposed to backfilling vacancies.
- Information on identifying whether sufficiently robust procedures were in place to end contracts once work was completed.
- A cost comparison/consideration between having interims versus employing a member of staff.
- Information on /progress made on establishing a 'pool' of administrators across the Council.
- Figures previously reported to the Committee be provided to allow Members to identify trends.
- The dashboard data and figures presented in Appendix 1 of the report be accompanied by commentary to enable Members to fully understand and scrutinise the information provided.

7. Attendance Record

Resolved – That the Members' Attendance Record 2019/20 be noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting - 22nd October 2019

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)