

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 29 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillor R S Robinson, Chair

Councillors: L Fletcher
J C Goold
D Grindell (Substitute)
L A Lally
P Lally
P J Owen
J M Owen
D D Pringle (Substitute)
M Radulovic MBE (Substitute)
C M Tideswell
D K Watts

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hannah, M Brown, H Land and R D Willimott

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 **REFERENCES**

3.1 **LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

10 June 2021

CLOTHING, APPEARANCE AND IDENTITY CARDS POLICY

The Committee considered the amendments to the Clothing, Appearance and Identity Cards Policy.

The Policy had not been reviewed for nearly ten years, The Council recognised that workplace dress codes had progressed significantly over the past few years, particularly in relation to employees covered by the Equality Act and an increasing awareness of diversity and freedom of expression.

A sensible approach would be taken to the principles of the Policy by all employees in relation to clothing. The portrayal of a professional image when dealing with external parties, Committee meetings and public engagement should be considered.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Clothing, Appearance and Identity Cards Policy be approved.

3.2 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

10 June 2021

LEAVERS FEEDBACK FORM

Members considered the amendments to the Leaver's Questionnaire. The current non-mandatory Leavers Questionnaire had not been reviewed for over 15 years.

The revised form had been streamlined to collect only essential data that would be collated via a spreadsheet and extracted for relevant reporting.

Feedback would be used to inform and review and to develop improved terms and conditions for the future.

A query was raised if leaver interviews were conducted when an employee left the Authority. It was established it was again non- mandatory to hold a leaver interview, however if requested this would take place.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments to the Leaver's Questionnaire be approved.

3.3 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

10 June 2021

MARKET SUPPLEMENT POLICY

The Committee considered the new Market Supplement Policy to replace the current Scarcity Rating arrangements from the Evaluation and Re-evaluation of Posts Policy.

The current scarcity rating arrangement was failing to address the difficulties experienced by the Council in two main areas, delay and retention.

The Market Supplement Policy offered a number of improvements over the existing arrangements including retention to offer flexibility to be applied to a post in order to retain skilled resource and review to ensure that should the market improve any market supplement could be removed.

The Market Supplement Policy would be applied to existing employees in the same job, including part-timers on a pro rata basis, where it had been decided that there were grounds to authorise a market supplement to assist with recruitment.

RESOLVED that the implementation of a new Market Supplement Policy and the amended Evaluation and Re-Evaluation of Posts Policy be approved.

4 ADDITIONAL PLANNING OFFICER

Members were updated with the issues surrounding the Planning Department including increased workload, particularly within Development Management.

Currently Planning Officers were dealing with an average caseload of 48 each this is normally set around 25-30 cases. It was established that this was unsustainable.

The department had received approximately £59K more in planning fees for the period 2020-21 when compared with 2019-20 and it was proposed that a portion of this revenue be used to create the new post.

Temporary agency staff had been working within the Planning Department to support the current ongoing issues, however this was not seen as a sustainable solution.

RESOLVED that the role of an additional Planning Officer be approved.

5 ENERGY EFFICIENCY BIDDING OFFICER

The Committee welcomed the addition of an Energy Efficiency Bidding Officer.

The new post would be required to apply for a range of government energy efficiency and decarbonisation grants for residents, tenants and the Council. Examples include Local Authority Delivery Grant, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Housing Upgrade Grant.

The Council were required to bid for these capital grants and due to the current capital works team workload, it was established it would not be possible to absorb the additional energy efficiency bidding work within the existing staffing structure. An alternative would have been to involve external consultants; however, this would be more expensive and the Council would not develop its own in-house bidding expertise.

RESOLVED that the role of an additional Energy Efficiency Bidding Officer be approved.

6 RESTRUCTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM

Members welcomed the proposed restructure to the Environmental Health team.

The structure would redesignate a vacancy post within the food team and provide a Senior Environmental Health Officer to support the direct line management of the team of Food and Occupational Safety Officers.

Concern had been raised of the impact of workload that may increase with staff leaving and how Environmental Health Officers had been impacted with COVID-19 issues and the extra workload arising from the UK leaving the European Union.

RESOLVED that the proposal to redesignate post H78 from Environmental Health Officer (Food and Occupational Safety) to Senior Environmental Health Officer (Food and Occupational Safety) be approved.

7 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2021-23

The Committee considered the new Member Development programme and welcomed the training to ensure Councillors were properly equipped to undertake their duties and provide safeguards towards the integrity of Council decision making and good governance.

Training was felt to be extremely important for every Councillor and they all welcomed the new Member Development Programme to assist them in their roles and develop knowledge as a result of legislation or localised issues, whilst contributing to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities, objectives and ambitions.

Members raised some queries around how the training would be delivered as it was highlighted that not all Councillors had the flexibility to attend during the working day and some were concerned about the monitoring process. Councillors would be encouraged and supported to be able to fully participate in training and identify their own development needs. A flexible approach to the delivery of training and development opportunities would be adopted to meet the potential needs of individuals and groups. A variety of methods would be used to deliver these opportunities and could include seminars, workshops, e-learning and briefing sessions.

RESOLVED that the Member Development Programme 2021-23 be approved.

8 VETERANS INTERVIEW SCHEME UPDATE

The Committee were updated on the progress in respect of the Veteran's Interview Scheme.

The Council's application form had been updated however there had been a delay in engaging the Veteran community due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and Rick Harrington having other demanding work commitments.

9 UPDATE ON THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE WELLBEING OF STAFF MENTAL HEALTH

Members were updated on the progress in respect of the action plan for the wellbeing of staff mental health.

It had been encouraging that staff had participated in the recent photograph competition and the newsletter had been a success with ideas of nature walks, tips on managing stress and loneliness. The development of a regular Mental Health Champions podcast had been successful with the first episode being on sleep.

It was noted that the employee wellbeing room had been opened and this room would be used for wellbeing, quiet reflection and prayer.

10 REVIEW OF PROCEDURES OF DEALING WITH SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Committee was advised of the review of the procedure which exists for Officers to follow if a person that they are dealing with threatens self-harm or suicide.

As a result of the review, it was not intended to make any changes to the procedure as staff were appreciative of the guidance the current procedure had and assisted them in dealing with distressing incidents.

The buddy system where a colleague could be called upon was not as straight forward working from home however with the current procedure and Manager support offered to the employee, this provided a review and follow up to the incident.

A suggestion of examples of scenarios of how staff dealt with a person who threatens self-harm or suicide would be useful to gauge an understanding of the situation the staff member is under and how they dealt with the incident.

It was requested that the procedure be extended to support Councillors for suicide prevention. Past experiences of dealing with such instances and how they had taken an emotional toll were discussed and that we need to work together to provide support.

11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS - SUPPORT SERVICE AREAS - HUMAN RESOURCES - OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

The Committee noted the progress made in achieving the Human Resources Key Tasks within the Resources Business Plans and the outturn performance indicators for 2020/21.

Members were updated with the progress made against outcome targets identified in the Business Plans for the support services areas, linked to Corporate Plan priorities and objectives, and were provided with an update to the latest key performance indicators therein.

12 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme.

RESOLVED that the work programme with the additional items to include the latest Employee Survey Results, Monitoring of New Posts and Retention and Recruitment Overview be approved.

13 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act

14 URGENCY DECISIONS

The Committee noted the use of the Chief Executive's urgency powers.