

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held as a REMOTE MEETING on Wednesday, 10th February 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R J West – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, D N Keane, J M Palmer, D Terry and D M Tysoe.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor C J Maslen.

9 COUNCILLOR MRS JILL TAVENER

The Committee observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of Councillor Mrs Jill Tavener.

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

11 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

12 WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT (QUARTER 3)

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st October to 31st December 2020. The report included the latest position and trends relating to employee numbers, salary costs and sickness absence. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee was informed that the total number of employees at the end of the last quarter was higher than at the end of the previous quarter and that the total spend on pay costs for employees in 2020/21 was forecast to be £1.4m less than the year's budget.

In response to a comment by Councillor Tysoe on the age profile of staff joining the workforce, it was agreed that analysis of joiners was valuable and would be incorporated into the new workforce strategy. Work also was being undertaken on turnover of employees by age band and by service area. This information would be compared with regional data should it become available. Members recognised the value of understanding trends by section.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that that Council was endeavouring to move away from using staffing agencies to other recruitment routes such as apprenticeships, redeployment and growing talent internally. Where agencies

were used, there was a requirement to involve HR staff, who could assist with negotiations. Recruitment would form part of the new workforce strategy.

The Strategic HR Lead reported that a recruitment system was being introduced. It would provide HR with data on which methods of recruitment were effective, including advertisements placed on the Council's website.

The Committee discussed sickness absence. The number of days lost was lower compared with the same period in previous year. The most frequently given reasons for sickness absence tended to be for longer term conditions. Working from home during the pandemic did not appear to be a contributory factor. Workstation equipment was available if required.

The report indicated that two employees had retired in the quarter. Members recognised the employees' achievements and conveyed their congratulations to them. However, one employee had died while in service. The Committee requested that their condolences be conveyed to the individual's family. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the contents of the report be noted, and
- b) that the Council place on record its recognition of and gratitude for the excellent contributions made by the two employees who have recently retired from their employment in the local government service and convey its best wishes to them for long and happy retirements.

13 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

With the assistance of a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee considered the draft 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement. The Statement provided information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of Chief Officers and other employees, as required by the Localism Act. In introducing the report, the Strategic HR Manager referred to forthcoming changes in legislation that might necessitate the submission of a mid-year up to the Committee, the Returning and Monitoring Officers and how pay supplements were treated. The Statement would be published on the Council's website together with data on Senior Officers' salaries as required by the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

Members commented on the positive position reflected in the report, the value of the whole remuneration package and the method by which salaries were determined. Having received confirmation that the Statement adequately covered the latter before it was submitted to the Council, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22.

14 LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

The Committee considered a report by the HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a revised Leave Arrangements Policy. The Policy had been amended following changes in legislation.

Members discussed the terms of the Policy in relation to parental bereavement, compassionate leave and return to work support. In response to a question on carrying over leave, it was confirmed that trends would be monitored and, where necessary, it would be actively managed. Having noted that the actions taken to manage leave during the pandemic had not been incorporated into the Policy because the circumstances were exceptional, it was

RESOLVED

that the Leave Arrangements Policy appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

15 STAFF COUNCIL

Mr M Cann, Representing the Staff Council, commented that the reports elsewhere on the Agenda demonstrated that the Council operated in line with other sectors. He also referred to the fact that a significant number of comments had been made by members of the public about Council employees during the pandemic.

Chairman