

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 23 November 2022

PRESENT: Councillor P A Jordan – Chair.

Councillors A M Blackwell, S Cawley, C M Gleadow, M A Hassall, D N Keane and B A Mickelburgh.

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

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

12 WORKFORCE REPORT QUARTER TWO 2022-23

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st July to 30th September 2022. 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 lower than at the end of the previous quarter and that the total spend on pay costs for employees in 2022/23 was forecasted to be £1,320,175 lower than the year's budget. Regarding the number of employees, in response to a request by Councillor Hassall, the Strategic HR Manger agreed to compile information of the head count since 2014.

The report indicated that two employees had retired in the quarter. Members recognised the employees' achievements and conveyed their congratulations to them.

On the difficulties being experienced recruiting new employees, Members noted that these were particularly felt in the Planning and ICT sections. Following discussion on the merits of different forms of reward and other factors such as job security, the Chair enquired about the four-day-week trial being undertaken at South Cambridgeshire District Council. Having been advised that the trial was part of a global initiative, it was reported that no information had been shared to date, but progress would be monitored. Committee was further advised that the forthcoming Staff Survey would provide evidence on which to base future recruitment strategies. The results of the survey would be presented to the

Committee at a future meeting. Members also requested sight of the questions asked.

On a related subject, the Committee discussed achievement recognition through the iCare awards, the use of performance measures as part of the Annual Review process for all employees and the previous use of other forms of performance related feedback.

In response to questions by Vice-Chair and the Chair, the Strategic HR Manager reported that higher absence levels were the result of an increase in long-term absence and that analysis would be undertaken of the causes of the increase in skeletal problems. Regarding the latter, it was confirmed that assessments of working arrangements were necessary for the those who worked from home. Following a further question by Councillor Gleadow, the Strategic HR Manager outlined the measures that had been adopted to reduce stress, including direct support through the Employee Assistance Programme and the appointment of Mental Health First Aiders. At the conclusion of their deliberations on this item Members considered areas they might usefully investigate, including homeworking arrangements and polices and health and safety. It was then

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 HR POLICY UPDATE COMMENCING 2022

By means of a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee was acquainted with the outcome of reviews of a number of policies. The reviews were the first stage in a programme to review and refresh the Council's polices to ensure they were accurate, legally compliant and reflected correct practice. Having noted that all policies would be subject to review and that consultation with UNISON and the Employee Reference Group took place as part of the process, it was

RESOLVED

that the Redundancy, Absence Without Authorised Leave, Disciplinary, Volunteers Policies and the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure be endorsed.

14 EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES GROUP

No matters had been identified for consideration.

Chair