

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in the Meeting Room 0.1A and 0.1B, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 15 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R J West – Chairman.

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors C J Maslen, J M Palmer, D Terry and D J Wells.

## 4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Committee's meetings held on 10th February and 19th May were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

## 5 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

## 6 WORKFORCE REPORT QUARTER ONE 2021-22

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st April to 30 June 2021. 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 2021/22 was forecast to be £189k higher than the year's budget.

In response to a question by the Chairman, it was confirmed that while the figures for those leaving the Council's employment had been affected by the review of the Leisure service, the Council experienced significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff and that these often reflected national circumstances. While financial incentives were available, the Council also had a range of other initiatives designed to ensure sufficient employee resources were available.

Members discussed sickness trends in the Quarter. The figures revealed that sickness absence remained low and had, in fact, decreased since the end of the previous quarter. The rate of short-term sickness was now higher than that for long-term sickness and, importantly, stress did not appear as the most frequent reason for absence. Regarding the latter, the work of the Strategic HR Manager and the HR Team on mental health was recognised as a significant factor.

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

## **7 USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF**

The Committee placed on record their gratitude for the contribution made to the Council by Claire Edwards in her capacity as Chief Finance Officer.

Consideration was then given to the report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing the annual monitoring information on the use of interim staff. Members were informed that compared with the previous year there had been a net decrease of £437k in the cost of interim staff and that all expenditure was within budget.

In response to a question by Councillor Jordan, the Committee was informed that the Resource Implications of the report included repairs to assets purchased under the Capital Investment Strategy. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

## **8 EQUALITY POSITION**

The Committee gave consideration to a report by the Managing Director (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the Council's position relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). In introducing the report, the Managing Director outlined the legal framework surrounding the PSED. She then drew Members' attention to an action, which had been identified to update the corporate policy/strategy and the options through which this action might be completed. Having discussed the options, support was expressed for Option 2 on the grounds that it was a proportionate and Huntingdonshire focussed way of fulfilling the Council's statutory obligations around Equality. Having noted that all Managers would be responsible for delivering the Action Plan 2021/25, it was

RESOLVED

that Option 2 – to link the Council's equality objectives to the Corporate Plan – be endorsed.

## **9 EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES**

No matters had been identified for consideration.

Chairman