

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in the GROUND FLOOR MEETING ROOM (CONINGSBY/BOURNE ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 17th April 2024

PRESENT: Councillor P A Jordan – Chair.

Councillors A Blackwell, S Cawley, L Davenport-Ray, C M Gleadow and D N Keane.

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

## **34 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **35 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

## **36 COUNCILLOR RICHARD WEST**

The Committee placed on record its appreciation of the achievements of Councillor Richard West during the six years that he had been Chair of the Employment Committee. Councillor West had recently ceased to be a Member of the Council, and his inclusive, detailed and fair approach was recognised.

## **37 WORKFORCE STRATEGY - PILLAR 2 - ENGAGEMENT**

Consideration was given to a report by the Strategic HR Manager to which was attached the draft Pillar 2 (Engagement) of the Workforce Strategy. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book. By way of introduction N Harpham, HR Manager – Projects, outlined the scope of the involvement of employees and the uses to which their feedback had been put. The Chair expressed support for the structure of the document.

Following a question by Councillor Cawley, the Strategic HR Manager informed the Committee that training of managers would be important in enabling employees to adopt new ways of working post-covid. Investment and support would be necessary for this purpose. However, individual Officers also had personal responsibility to adapt to different ways of working. In that context, it was recognised that there now was insufficient space to allow all Officers to work from Pathfinder House full-time and that new patterns of work had been established.

In response to a question from Councillor Davenport-Ray, the Employee Representatives expressed support for the Engagement key priorities.

The Committee expressed its gratitude to for the work that had been undertaken on the Strategy to date. It was then

RESOLVED

that the ongoing work towards the development of the Strategy be endorsed.

**38 POLICY UPDATE - DISABILITY AT WORK, LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS, PATERNITY LEAVE AND PROBATION POLICIES**

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 the Disability at Work, Leave Arrangements, Paternity Leave and Probation Policies. Members' attention was drawn to the changes that had been made.

Councillor Davenport-Ray asked a question about the role to the Employee Representative Group (ERG) under the Disability at Work Policy. In response, it was reported that the ERG area of the intranet would be revised to show Representatives' key strengths so that individuals knew where to go.

Following a question by the Chair about Probation Policy timeframes, the Strategic HR Manager informed the Committee that all Officers were required to complete probation, but that those who were appointed on a short-term basis had shortened probation periods.

In response to a question by Councillor Davenport-Ray on Paternity Leave eligibility, the Strategic HR Manager confirmed the Policy's terms reflected the legal framework. Furthermore, it was planned to combine all family policies to create an all-encompassing policy.

Regarding carry-over of leave, it was reported that while Officers were encouraged to take such leave within three months, it could be taken at any time in the year according to the needs of services. Having noted that if carried-over leave was not taken within the year it expired, it was

RESOLVED

that the Disability at Work, Leave Arrangements, Paternity Leave and Probation Policies appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

**39 PAY AWARD 2024 AND PAY PROCESS.**

The Committee received and noted a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the outcome of the 2024/25 pay discussion process. Members were informed that agreement had been reached and payment of the new rates had commenced.

Members' attention was drawn to the terms of a new Pay Award Process, which was appended to the report by the Strategic HR Manager. The Process had been Management, the union and the Employee Representative Group with support from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. In response to a

question by Councillor Davenport-Ray, it was reported that as agreement had been reached it had not been necessary to use the whole process. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the report be received and noted, and
- b) that the Pay Award Process appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

Chair