
Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 8th February 2012

Matters for Information

18. EMPLOYMENT REPORT

(The figures relating to sickness absence were considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Panel has considered a range of information relating to the management of the Council's workforce and the workload of the Human Resources Team. This has included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- ◆ employee numbers;
- ◆ salary costs;
- ◆ employee turnover;
- ◆ retention of new starters;
- ◆ sickness absence reporting; and
- ◆ the Human Resources caseload.

In considering the information which was provided, the Panel has discussed in detail the statistics relating to sickness absence. Members have noted that the annual average days sickness per FTE employee has reduced from 8.5 to 8.4 days in the year to 31st December 2011 and remains well below the average for local government. The Panel also has noted that the Human Resources Team has modified the categories in which sickness was recorded which should produce a better picture of the reasons for sickness absence in the next quarterly report. Members have emphasised the need for Heads of Service and Activity Managers to record information accurately so that appropriate interventions can be introduced.

In considering the statistics for sickness in the category 'stress, depression, mental health and fatigue', Members have noted that a number of Mental Health Awareness sessions had been arranged for employees. The Panel has discussed the need to engage managers in these type of programmes and have been reminded that all Heads of Service have a Key Performance Indicator for staff management.

The Panel has discussed whether there was a need to establish a corporate performance indicator for sickness management. Although the need for targets was discussed, the Panel agreed that it was sufficient to report and monitor trends at a future meeting.

A copy of the full report is available from Democratic Services on request and has been published on the District Council's website.

19. REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE CAR LOAN SCHEME

Following recent review, the Panel has endorsed a number of changes to the existing Car Loan Scheme. The changes will ensure that individual employees are not encouraged to borrow more than is affordable and will simplify the administration of the scheme, by bringing interest rates into line with those used by the HMRC.

Having noted concerns as to the whether the Council should continue to offer the option of a car loan scheme to its staff, the Panel has agreed that the longer term retention of the scheme should be considered as part of the discussions with employees on the review of pay and the pay structure.

20. RETIREMENT OF EMPLOYEES – ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for, the excellent contribution made by Mr T Newland, Refuse and Recycling Loader during his 22 years employment in the local government service and conveyed its best wishes to him for a long and happy retirement.

21. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.)

With the assistance of a report by the Corporate Team Manager (the report is reproduced as Item No.6 on the Council Agenda) the Panel has given preliminary consideration the content of a proposed Statement of Pay Policy for 2012/13. The Pay Policy Statement provides information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of chief officers and other employees, as required by sections 38 – 43 of the Localism Act 2011.

In considering the content of the statement, Members have sought clarification on a number of matters and commented on the presentation of some of the information within the report. Having identified that there still were several matters which required further clarification, the Executive Leader requested that there be no further discussion at the meeting. An updated paper would be circulated to the Panel before the statement was submitted to the Council for final approval.

22. PAY REVIEW PROJECT

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Panel has received an update on the discussions with Employees' Side representatives in advance of the review of the Council's pay grades and bands.

In considering the principles and objectives which had been agreed for the project, Members have made a number of further comments and suggestions for consideration during the review. Further updates on progress will be submitted to future meetings.

23. UPDATE ON HR REVIEW OF HR SERVICES

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Panel has received an update on current discussions regarding the future of the District Council's Human Resources and Payroll function. Members have been informed that there was still a significant amount of work to be undertaken to determine whether the Council wished to pursue a proposal to outsource the function. Officers are making strenuous efforts to enable the Cabinet to reach a conclusion at their meeting on 22nd March 2012, although it was noted that this is a matter not to be rushed and consequently may be addressed by a later Cabinet meeting.

P A Swales
Chairman