

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

Councillors Present: Adrian Abbs (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks), Dennis Benneyworth, Nassar Kessell, Garth Simpson and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Robert O'Reilly (Head of Human Resources), Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Brooks

PART I

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2019 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

8. Council Workforce Strategy 2019-2023 (PC3755)

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) which set out the Council's Workforce Strategy which was designed to sit alongside the Council Strategy.

Robert O' Reilly explained that the Strategy would be delivered by leadership from elected Members and Senior Managers; by Managers in Services; by employees 'going the extra mile' and living the Council values of Fairness, Integrity and Customer Service; and by the efforts of the HR Service. The new Workforce Board would monitor progress on the Workforce Strategy with a report to Corporate Board and the Corporate Management Team every six months and an annual report to Operations Board.

The Strategy set out the challenges facing the Council, how those challenges would be addressed together with an action plan. Two of the main challenges were around recruitment and retention and apprenticeship skills and development. Employee wellbeing and mental health related issues were also key areas of focus. Further work was required around organisational development and leadership. Robert O'Reilly confirmed that pressure bids for additional resource had been submitted and were currently going through Budget Board. Should those bids not be approved for 2020/21 then it was hoped that they would be agreed for the following year.

Councillors Garth Simpson and Howard Woollaston stated that the strategy seemed to be very thorough and they commended Robert O'Reilly on such a good piece of work. Councillor Simpson queried which of the challenges or pressures was more vulnerable. Robert O'Reilly responded that there was still uncertainty around what effect Brexit would have on recruitment which might be particularly applicable in Adult Social Care. There was also uncertainty around the Apprenticeship Levy. West Berkshire had been successful in using this funding but there might be an issue going forward as it would be necessary to find new customers and the Council was looking to bring in more

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disadvantaged or looked after young people onto the scheme and that had been included in the pressure bid. In response to a query Robert O'Reilly stated that the Council was looking to become a training provider which might mean that it would be able to sell the service to other authorities although there was uncertainty as to whether this would actually get off the ground.

Councillor Adrian Abbs stated that at a recent selection process for a senior position it had been mentioned that there had been a limited pool to draw from which meant that the salary was likely to be high and the choice low. He queried whether there was any strategy in the pipeline to attract people in from the private sector as he noted that several high level positions would be likely to become vacant in the next year or two. Robert O'Reilly queried whether the Council would actually want to do that as there were pros and cons for bringing people in with no experience of working in local government. Sometimes it would be good to bring in people with new ideas but they could become frustrated with the slow speed of the decision making. He felt that it would be necessary to have a discussion with Executive Members as to whether that was a direction that they would like to move in. Councillor Howard Woollaston said that often the salary in local government was lower than in the private sector and there would be a huge cultural difference which might be difficult to adapt to. It would also depend on which role was being recruited into. Councillor Abbs responded that the longer the pool remained small then the more difficult it would become to recruit suitable candidates. Robert O'Reilly confirmed that areas such as HR, Finance and IT did attract people from the private sector but this would be difficult for roles such as Environmental Health Officers or Trading Standards Officers. He agreed that a higher number of applications would be received if there was no requirement for local government experience and it would be worthwhile debating that at some point.

RESOLVED that the Workforce Strategy as set out in Appendix D be approved and that it be noted that the Workforce Strategy might be changed prior to March 2020 to include the outcome of discussions on scoring of appraisals and training only being approved where all mandatory training had been completed.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on 15 October 2019 at 3.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at 3.30 pm and closed at 3.49 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature