

DRAFT

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

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 4 JULY 2023

Councillors Present: Stuart Gourley (Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeff Brooks and Matt Shakespeare

Also Present: Sarah Clarke, Paula Goodwin, Samantha Hodson, Lizzie Reeves, Sadie Owen, Harriet Saunders

Councillor Absent: Councillor Biyi Oloko

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies.

2. **Minutes**

The Chairman noted that the time recorded for the meeting of 25 May 2023 was incorrect.

Further to the above amendment, the Minutes of the meetings held on 21 February 2023 and 25 May 2023 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4. **Update on HR Activity 2022/2023**

Paula Goodwin introduced the report (Agenda Item 4), which provided an update on all HR activity for 2022/2023.

Councillor Matt Shakespeare noted that whilst 206 agency workers were covering some of the vacant posts, there was still a deficit of 167 vacancies, and queried how the work was being covered. Paula Goodwin explained that most organisations ran with a vacancy rate and suggested that some of the gaps were due to turnover and waiting for new starters to join. It was however acknowledged that some areas were difficult to recruit to and that there was a national issue with social workers.

Councillor Jeff Brooks commented that as the relevant Portfolio Holder, he had discussed the figures with Paula Goodwin and explained that in an organisation the size of the Council, there would always be a number of agency workers employed. Councillor Brooks reported that work was being undertaken to reduce the number of agency staff, with temporary to permanent conversions and that recruitment was likely to be one of the first transformation projects.

Councillor Antony Amirtharaj commented that he was encouraged by the fact that the Council would be welcoming its first cohort of students and graduates in Autumn 2023.

Councillor Stuart Gourley queried whether recruitment to the two talent attraction posts had improved the speed of recruitment. Paula Goodwin noted that Samantha Hodson

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was a talent attraction manager and had been focused on reviewing processes and procedures to reduce the time to hire.

Samantha Hodson concurred and added that there had been a focus on developing more data to enable greater analysis of underlying issues to understand how to improve the system. It was hoped that such information would be available at the next meeting of the Personnel Committee.

Councillor Brooks added that an Employer Value Proposition was also being developed which would further assist in attracting talent to the Council.

Councillor Gourley queried whether there was any specific reason as to why the People directorate suffered from more staff absent through sickness than others. Harriet Saunders explained that it was due greatly to the makeup of the directorate, with a lot of front line care workers who would be more likely to become infected with illness. Further there was no opportunity to work from home. Harriet Saunders noted that the data was not unusual when compared with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), absence data for similar professions.

Councillor Shakespeare noted that there was a large percentage of absence due to mental health issues which appeared to be three times the national average when compared with ONS data. Harriet Saunders responded that it was difficult to assess as there were no national comparisons at that level, however staff in caring professions tended to be women and anecdotally the cumulative effect of dealing with family, home schooling and professional life had been indirectly linked to three years of Covid and lockdown. Further it was noted that mental health provision from the NHS was difficult to access.

Harriet Saunders clarified that the Council provided up to six counselling sessions for staff members where appropriate.

Councillor Brooks commented that exit interviews were an area of improvement for the Council and that it should be an aim to capture more useful data from the process.

Councillor Shakespeare noted that the number of completed appraisals across the Council was 83%, as opposed to the target of 90% and queried a reason for the discrepancy. Paula Goodwin explained that the data was taken from a system which relied on a manager reporting that an appraisal had taken place. It was felt that there was an issue with under reporting and that work was being undertaken to improve the process. It was anticipated that there would be greater data availability once the new HR/payroll system was implemented.

Personnel Committee noted the report.

Agreed action:

- Open offers information to be included in future reports.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on 16 January 2024 at 6.30pm.

(The meeting commenced at Time Not Specified and closed at 7.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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Date of Signature