

# 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, 14 DECEMBER 2021

**Councillors Present:** Adrian Abbs, Dennis Benneyworth, James Cole (Chairman) and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** Councillor Jeff Brooks

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Garth Simpson

#### PART I

##### 1. **Appointment of Chair**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor James Cole be elected Chairman of the Personnel Committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

##### 2. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

##### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### 4. **Workforce Strategy 2019 - 2023 : Refreshed 2021 (PC4020)**

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 5), and highlighted that it provided a refreshed version rather than complete revision of the strategy. It was noted that the strategy covered the period 2019-2023, and that the report included details of two new initiatives in the review of performance management processes and competency framework, and development of a total reward and recognition strategy.

Members commented on the lack of recently updated information within the report.

In response to a query the HR Service Lead commented that the council was currently looking offers from a variety of organisations in relation to providing training for managers to work remotely.

Concern was raised at the gender workforce split of 76% to 24% in favour of women, and the fact that there had been a 'Career progression for women' project. It was suggested that whilst members were fully supportive of the scheme, there should potentially be more of an emphasis on recruiting men given the large disparity.

Members suggested that there was too much focus on in-house training and that the organisation should explore more opportunities with external consultants, particularly in relation to issues of diversity.

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The committee reviewed the report and made the following comments and observations:-

- It was commented that the second sentence in 5.4 should refer to 'ambitions' rather than 'ambitious'.
- Members commented that there was little mention of objectives or appraisals.
- The statement within paragraph 2.1 that employees had a 'can-do attitude' was criticised as being unsubstantiated and too general
- There was a request that the next meeting include a paper on appraisals.
- There was a request that the next meeting include a paper on current grievances/disciplinary actions.
- There was a request that the next meeting include a paper relating to training detailing the extent of external as opposed to in-house training available and undertaken by staff.

**RESOLVED:** the Committee

- Approved the refreshed Workforce Strategy and new delivery plan.
- Request for a paper to cover an update on recruitment, grievances and disciplinaries (casework), training and appraisals at the next meeting.

### 5. **Annual Employment Report 2020/2021 (PC4162)**

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 6) which was for information only.

It was clarified that the table at section 6.2 of the report related to figures between April 2020 and March 2021.

It was clarified that the format of Appendix B was dictated by publication requirements, however the HR Service Lead suggested that it could be presented in an alternative, more user friendly format should members require.

It was reported that sickness absence had reduced during the pandemic and it was thought that this was due to people working from home and consequently continuing to work when otherwise they may have stayed away from the office.

Members commented on the reduction of training completed by staff in 2019-20, and suggested that the organisation required a robust training programme with adherence where possible. In response the HR Service Lead reported that during the pandemic, with increased demands, staff had re-prioritised with optional training, but that the mandatory course completion had rate had not significantly fallen. It was suggested that training had picked up again recently as the effects of the pandemic lessened. It was reported that a training needs analysis was being undertaken during January to compile a full training programme implementation in April.

It was noted that stress was the reason for a significant number of staff absences. In response to a query as to what measures had been taken in the light of this, the HR Service Lead explained that a new Employee Assistance Programme had been implemented in July 2020. This allowed staff to phone confidentially to receive immediate advice. The service had links to counselling which was paid for by the council and also signposted links to other local and national organisations that may provide assistance.

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Ten mental health first aiders had been trained and recruitment of a Wellbeing Officer was currently underway. It was further noted that training for managers was also offered to highlight the need for wellbeing conversations with staff and to ensure regular catch ups.

Agreed actions:-

- Members requested further information in relation to Appendix A, with detailed numbers of resignations as opposed to retirements.
- Members requested clarification and reasoning for the drop in the 2019-20 retirement/early retirement figures.
- Members requested a full breakdown of recruitment data, in relation to posts advertised, staff recruited and vacancies unfilled.

**RESOLVED:**the Committee note the report.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on 11 February at 10:30 am.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 6.30 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....