

# DRAFT

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

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2022

**Councillors Present:** James Cole (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Richard Somner (as substitute), and Howard Woollaston

**Officers Present:** Paula Goodwin, Sadie Owen, Abigail Witting

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

#### 7. Minutes

Councillor Abbs drew attention to a sentence under item 4 which stated '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 the statement relating to the 'Career progression for women project', was incorrect and should be removed.

Cllr Woollaston commented that Cllr Benneyworth had attended the meeting as a substitute, and requested that the third paragraph under item 4 be amended to the 'council was looking for offers'.

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 8. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 9. Update on HR Activity 2021 Q1/2/3

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 5).

Members made the following comments and observations:-

##### *Appraisals*

It was queried why employees were not set specific timeframes to complete appraisals.

The HR Service Lead reported that the report reflected the current position and that once the new behaviour framework was developed there would be a full review of the appraisal system and that the lack of deadlines would be rectified under the new process.

It was suggested that managers should also be trained to pick up any issues of concern outside the appraisal process.

The HR Service Lead confirmed that the appraisal process was being reviewed and reformed in its totality and would include far greater training for managers.

Attention was drawn to the appraisal data for the ICT department and it was commented that the new system needed to be robust with managers encouraged to prioritise appraisals.

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It was noted that the new Chief Executive was fully supportive of the review of the appraisal system and it was anticipated that there would be significant pressure from senior management to improve results.

In response to a suggestion that appraisals should include an indication as to the performance of an employee, the HR Service Lead commented that an appropriate measure and standard was being developed.

In response to a suggestion that sight of the appraisal framework would be useful when reviewing the data, the HR Service Lead agreed to provide a link to the current appraisal system. It was reported that the new system would not be ready to share until late spring/early summer.

### *Casework*

It was suggested and agreed that benchmarking should be against both similar private sector industries as well as against the public sector. However it was noted that this would need to be undertaken in a holistic manner rather than just looking at the straight data.

It was commented that if the 7.15 days recorded under section 6.7 could be maintained then it would be a significant improvement.

It was suggested that the Employment Tribunal data should also detail whether the cases were still open, the average length of time taken to deal with, and the cost to the council.

In response, the HR Service Lead agreed to take advice from the Monitoring Officer, due to the GDPR implications of publishing such information. It was clarified that the cases within the report were all live cases, and that the council historically had not been taken to tribunal.

It was queried why 2 cases which had commenced in 2019 were still outstanding, and suggested that by having a KPI detailing average length of time to resolution, would focus officers to solve cases quicker.

The HR Service Lead agreed to report back to the committee following discussions with the Monitoring Officer.

It was suggested and agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture should review and ensure that the cases were being expedited with sufficient speed.

### *Staff Absence*

It was queried whether initiatives such as Timelord2 were contributing to the stress suffered by members of staff.

The HR Service Lead commented that this had not been investigated specifically, but that staff survey data indicated that staff wellbeing was directly impacted by any general change project, and so was likely to be impacted by Timelord2. However it was clarified that whilst wellbeing may be impacted it was not necessarily stress related.

It was suggested that a standard return to work question for an employee suffering with stress, should be whether the stress was work related. This was felt to be particularly important given the number of different pressures impacting people during the pandemic, and the fact that daily interaction with team members may have significantly reduced, making identification of such issues harder to recognise.

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### *Training*

It was noted that mandatory training occurred on a 3 year cycle, and consequently numbers would fluctuate accordingly. It was further explained that some training had needed to be reduced due to external trainers refusing to provide training remotely.

In relation to a request for the percentage of mandatory training being missed, the HR Service Lead clarified that the information was published quarterly as part of the KPI requirements and so could be readily shared.

It was reported that a Training Needs Analysis survey had recently been undertaken to identify staff training requirements.

It was suggested that the emphasis should be on training that staff 'need' rather than 'want'.

It was commented that emphasis shouldn't just be on attending training courses but also on the effectiveness of that training and calibre of internal trainer.

The HR Service Lead clarified that feedback was requested from all staff attending a training session, however this could potentially be improved upon.

In response to a query as to why training figures remained lower than the position during 2018/19, the HR Manager suggested that there had been mandatory GDPR training for every member of staff during that period.

### *Retention*

The HR Manager reported that the current KPI for turnover was less than 14% and that this was benchmarked against the LGA form. However it was also acknowledged that there was a desire to increase diversity and equality numbers and consequently a balance to be made.

It was clarified that figures related only to employees and wouldn't include contractor figures. It was noted that the commissioning department was responsible for contractors, and the HR Manager agreed to investigate the possibility of obtaining comparable retention data for contractors.

### *Recruitment*

Cllr Brooks offered to provide some advice to the HR department, given his significant experience and 38 years working within the recruitment sector. The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Culture and Leisure welcomed Cllr Brooks' offer.

It was noted that in relation to page 29 of the report approximately one third of recruitment was 'off-contract' and consequently not going through managed service provider. This was felt to be of potential impact to the rebate.

The HR Manager clarified that initially most job vacancies would be filled by direct recruitment. Comensura would be utilised in instances requiring immediate recruitment or where direct recruitment had failed. It was reported that other agencies would then be consulted where Commensura had been unsuccessful.

Cllr Brooks requested sight of the service level agreement and agreed to discuss that and the off contract spend with the HR team. He commented that he was aghast at the fact that the commissioning department were responsible for managing the Commensura contract. It was suggested that HR as the service users should be responsible for the contract.

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It was suggested that the WBC job application website required some work. Job descriptions were felt to be too wordy. More visuals were suggested and improvements in relation to a welcome from the Leader of the Council or Chief Executive suggested.

In response to a query the HR Manager clarified that the website allowed for direct applicant tracking.

It was suggested that Google analytics would provide further extensive information in relation to candidates looking at the website.

The HR Service Lead agreed to include mandatory training details within forthcoming reports and suggested bringing the report back to committee on a six monthly basis.

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

**10. Statutory Pay Policy 2022**

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 5), and commented that it had been produced as part of a statutory annual requirement and would need to obtain council approval for publication by 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Members made the following comments and suggestions:

- It was noted that change history should be recorded at the back of a report, not the front.
- It was noted that there was an additional bullet point at 2.16 of the policy.
- It was suggested that there should be more emphasis on packages rather than individual salaries, as these appeared more appealing.
- It was noted that section 2 duplicated section 1 of the Policy's covering report.

**RESOLVED:**the Committee unanimously approved the report for referral to Council on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on 29 April at 10:00 am.

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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