

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 31 January 2023 at 2.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Jason Slaymaker (Chairman)
Councillor Andrew Beere
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Amanda Watkins
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor George Reynolds (In place of Councillor Douglas Webb)

Also Present:

Councillor Sandy Dallimore

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Simon Holland
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Douglas Webb

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Andrew Low, Assistant Director Property Interim
Mandy Targett, HR Business Partner
Anna Thornicroft, Trainee HR Business Partner
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Officers Attending Virtually:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

29 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

30 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

31 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made two announcements:

1. Welcomed Mandy Targett and Anna Thornicroft from the HR Team to the meeting.
2. Thanked the members of the Committee involved in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group, and advised the Committee that a substantive update on the work would be given at the next meeting.

33 **Policy Updates**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive that sought approval on proposed changes to existing HR policies.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director of Human Resources explained that the HR team were systematically working through all policies and refreshing them where required, to simply and make them more user friendly.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised the Committee that the Employee Code of Conduct and Statutory Officer Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure had been reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and external solicitors, and all were happy with the proposed amendments.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chief Executive explained that there was not a working from home policy, but an agile working framework of 10 principles that all staff were aware of and expectations of the organisation were regularly referred to at all staff briefings.

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Corkin and seconded by Councillor Lynn Pratt that the policies be approved for implementation.

Resolved

- (1) That the following policies be approved for implementation:
- Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy
 - Compassionate Leave Policy
 - Court Attendance Policy
 - Employee Code of Conduct
 - Statutory Officer Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedure

34

Gender Pay Gap

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive that detailed the Gender Pay Gap as at 31 March 2022.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources explained to the Committee that the council were required to report gender pay gap findings to central Government and publish a report on the council's website by 30 March 2023.

The gender pay gap for the council stood at 1.64% at March 2022, or 29p an hour. This was an increase from the 2021 figure, but was still considerably lower than the national public sector pay gap of 13.6%.

In response to questions from the Committee the Assistant Director of Human Resources confirmed that following recent recruitment the position at the end of March 2023 could be different.

Resolved

- (1) That the Gender Pay Gap report be noted.

35

Workforce Profile Statistics

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive that detailed workforce profile statistics as at quarter two of 2022/23.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources explained that overall headcount of staff had increased during quarter three compared to quarter two, and there had been eight fewer leavers.

Regarding sickness absence, covid remained the highest reason for absence. In response to queries, the Assistant Director of Human Resources assured the Committee that any sickness absence involving stress was referred to occupational health partners for support, regardless of whether the stress was work related or personal.

Further to the quarter two update, the Assistant Director of Human Resources explained that the overall percentage of sensitive data held had increased to 75.86% of the organisation, an improvement of over 26%. The HR Team continued to engage with all staff to gather the requested information.

In response to queries from the Committee, the Assistant Director of Human Resources confirmed that officers could choose not to provide their sensitive data to HR if they preferred, as it was not a legal requirement for the council to collect the data.

Regarding the apprenticeship levy and the possibility of qualifying employers 'passporting' elements of their levy to other organisations, the Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that she would take the query away to find out more information and report back after the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce data for Quarter 3 of 2022/23 be noted.

36 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

- (1) That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

37 **Property Restructure**

The Committee considered an exempt report from the Corporate Director – Resources, that provided consultation feedback and proposed next steps in relation to the proposed restructure of the Property team.

Speaking in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Property, Councillor Lynn Pratt advised the Committee she was delighted to see the report presented for approval.

In response to queries from the Committee the Interim Assistant Director – Property explained that the restructure would provide more resource for responsibilities that were back in-house with the council following the decoupling with Oxfordshire County Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Lynn Pratt and seconded by Councillor George Reynolds that the business case and consultation notes be noted, and that implementation of the new structure be approved.

Resolved

- (1) That the business case and consultation notes be noted.
- (2) That implementation of the new structure be approved.

The meeting ended at 3.22 pm

Chairman:

Date: