

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 27 November 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chairman)
Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Gordon Blakeway

Substitute Members:

Councillor John Broad (In place of Councillor Fiona Mawson)
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (In place of Councillor Rebecca Biegel)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Fiona Mawson

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Susan Blunsden, HR Manager
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

18 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

20 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

23 **Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 2 of 2024-25**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to update members on Cherwell District Council's workforce including measuring staff well-being and to highlight the actions officers are taking to address any issues.

In response to Members' questions regarding levels of absence linked to work related stress and what support was offered to staff, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that several processes were in place to support staff, such as the return to work meeting, risk assessments, occupational health referrals, phased returns as well as the employee assist programme.

In response to Members' questions regarding access to employment and the interview process for minority groups, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the interview process was under review whilst data was gathered, and that an "Inclusion Champion network" was to be created to feed into the process.

In response to Members' questions regarding a request to include data on neurodivergence, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained officers will look to include any relevant data within the report due for the next meeting of the committee.

In response to Members' questions regarding the inclusion and support for British Sign Language (BSL) users within the council, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that previous workforce data did not include BSL as a category, but would look to include it going forward, and that the EDI working group would be best placed to look into the inclusivity of BSL within the Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce profile statistics for quarter 2 of 2024/25 (financial year dates) be noted.

24 **Policy Review Updates**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to seek approval from the Personnel Committee on proposed changes to four existing HR policies: Organisational Change Policy, Paternity Leave Policy, Carer's Leave Policy, and Drugs and Alcohol Policy.

In response to Members' questions regarding the potential for side effects of prescription medication on work duties and were there any processes in place to monitor this, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that this was not something included in the original policy and that officers would look into and feedback to the committee.

Resolved

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the following policies be approved for implementation:
 - a. Organisational Change Policy
 - b. Paternity Leave Policy
 - c. Carer's Leave Policy
 - d. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

The meeting ended at 7.14 pm

Chairman:

Date: