

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM 1, TOWN LODGE, GERONON ROAD,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY ON WEDNESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT 3.00 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Fiona Hill (Chairman), Sarah Dingley, Bernard Lovewell, Lynda Needham and Martin Stears-Handscomb (from 3.10pm).*

In Attendance: *Maggie Williams (Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager), Rebecca Webb (Human Resources Operations Manager), Christina Corr (Staff Consultation Forum), Dee Levett (Unison) and Ian Gourlay (Committee and Member Services Manager).*

Also Present:

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager) and Claire Morgan (Staff Consultation Forum).

11 MINUTES - 28 JUNE 2017

IT WAS AGREED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 28 June 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

12 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1)The Chairman welcomed all Members and officers to the Meeting;

(2)The Chairman reminded all present that, in line with Council policy, the meeting was being audio recorded;

(3)Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and were required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest which required they leave the room under Paragraph 7.4 of the Code of Conduct, could speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote.

14 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager drew attention to the Minutes of the meetings of the Staff Consultation Forum (SCF) held on 5 July 2017, 2 August 2017 and the Draft Minutes of 6 September 2017 as follows:

Minutes – 5 July 2017

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager confirmed that Norma Atlay (Strategic Director of Finance, Policy & Governance) had now left the Authority's service. In respect of the Office Accommodation project, Members and Officers had been kept well advised of progress by the Head of revenue, benefits and IT. The SCF had reviewed the Council's Wellbeing Policy, which had subsequently been published on the Intranet.

Minutes – 2 August 2017

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager stated that one of the key topics of discussion had been the water incident at Weston Reservoir on 1 August 2017. At the subsequent SCF meeting on 6 September 2017, the Chief Executive had advised that there had been a de-briefing in respect of the incident from the staff's perspective. The major concern for staff was that the instructions given to them regarding the water supply situation in Town Lodge and the Broadway Offices were not particularly clear. In relation to the NHDC Emergency Plan, the Committee was informed that the usual protocols had not been triggered as Affinity Water had not declared the matter as a "major incident".

Draft Minutes – 6 September 2017

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised that the SCF had been informed of the arrangements for the recruitment to the new Deputy Chief Executive post, the assessment process for which would be held on 6 October 2017. An equalities impact assessment had been prepared in respect of the refurbished District Council Offices (DCO) and facilities for people with disabilities had been fully incorporated into the refurbishment works. In addition, Careline would be relocating into the refurbished DCO from Harkness Court in Hitchin.

With regard to the Waste Team restructuring, the Human Resources Operations Manager explained that the new Joint Waste Contract with East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC) was planned to come into effect from May 2018. Consultation with staff in the Waste Teams of NHDC and EHDC had commenced. It was proposed that the EHDC employees would TUPE transfer to NHDC and a restructure would follow to ensure an effective team was in place to manage the contract. There was therefore a potential for redundancies. The staff consultation period would end on 13 October 2017, with a plan for the new structure to be in place by early February 2018 ready to mobilise for the contract commencement in May 2018.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 5 July 2017, 2 August 2017 and draft minutes for 6 September 2017 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to consider any issues addressed by the Staff Consultation Forum.

15 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE: INFORMATION NOTE

The Human Resources Operations Manager presented the Information Note entitled People Strategy Update.

The Human Resources Operations Manager advised that recruitment continued to be busy with several vacancies currently being filled. The Council now had its online account up and running to pay the Apprentice Levy and to purchase apprentice training in future. Feedback for a new improved shortlisting process had been positive and the process was now being used for the majority of vacancies. IT had built the system for online shortlisting for managers, which was being tested and looked very promising, with the hope for a go live date during the autumn of 2017.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager commented that mandatory gender pay gap reporting was introduced in the public sector from the end of March 2017, with the first set of data needing to be submitted by 31 March 2018. Discussions were underway with Serco regarding the reporting requirements and a solution was being developed by SAP which was

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currently being tested and should be available on general release by October 2017. It would then be tested by Serco and added to the system as part of the patching work that took place at the end of every calendar year. It was hoped the report would be available for consideration by Human Resources in early January 2018.

The Human Resources Operations Manager reported that the new Regular Performance Review (RPR) had been successfully implemented and had been well received. 95% of RPRS had been completed, and a new set of organisational competencies had been developed and were now in use.

The Human Resources Operations Manager stated that the Learning and Development Team were continuing to develop activities that supported organisational change. This had included Practical Project Management and Political Awareness workshops. Further workshops on supporting staff through organisational change were planned for early 2018. An Institute of Leadership and Management Level 5 Programme had also been completed.

The Human Resources Operations Manager commented that the Learning and Development Team was about to launch a replacement Learning Management System, which would be easier to use. This new resource for e-learning would be launched on 1 October 2017 for both Members and Officers. The Council's Investors in People standard had been renewed under the new standards and the recommendations received in late August 2017 would form the basis of an action plan for further improvements throughout 2017/18 and beyond.

The Human Resources Operations Manager advised that, following a review of the Council's Home-working Policy, some anomalies had been identified between the original statements of particulars of employment issued to home-workers when the scheme was first introduced, and current policy. New standard statements of particulars of employment for home-workers had therefore been prepared and would be issued to all current staff who home-worked.

In respect of key performance measures, the Human Resources Operations Manager explained that there had been a significant reduction in staff turnover, and short term absence figures had improved during 2017/18.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager and Human Resources Operations Manager answered a number of Member's questions on the report. They undertook to ensure that Members and Officers were informed of the successful outcome of the Investors in People re-accreditation.

16 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY: INFORMATION NOTE

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager presented the Information Note entitled Local Government Pay.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised that various issues need to be addressed, such as the impact of the National Living Wage, the fact that the National Pay Scales were 20 years old. The Pay Scales were currently being reviewed, but that it was unlikely that the Council would have the result of that review in time for the next pay round.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager stated that the Employers were currently meeting to agree their position, and the Council was awaiting details of their response to the Union pay demands. The Trade unions had submitted a pay claim for 2018/19, which was a "catch-up" claim following the years of 0 or 1% annual increases. This was a one year claim for a 5% increase across all staff and further amendments to the pay scales to bring them in line with the foundation living wage.

17 DISCUSSION PAPER - SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager introduced a Discussion Paper on Shared Parental Leave.

In response to a Member's question, the Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised that Shared Parental leave pay was paid at the lower rate of statutory Maternity pay, which came in after the first six weeks of that leave. At NHDC, Maternity pay was enhanced, by Shared Parental pay was not.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager commented that before the provisions were introduced, it had been highlighted that this could be potentially discriminatory. Nevertheless, it was allowed to proceed in this manner, and the Council (in line with most other employers) had opted to not augment Shared Parental pay.

The Committee noted that to date only one employee had taken Shared Parental leave at NHDC. The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager explained that one reason was the complexity of the scheme, in that there were a number of deadlines that had to be met in order to trigger entitlements, and that it was extremely difficult for individuals to navigate through the process. This was exacerbated should, as in most cases, the parents be employed by different organisations.

The Committee was advised that the idea of extending the scheme to working grandparents had been held in abeyance due to the Brexit Referendum and recent General Election.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager undertook to provide Members with details of the pay differentials between the first six weeks of Shared Parental Leave pay and the period thereafter.

To address concerns that employees were not fully aware of the provisions of Shared Parental Leave, the Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager stated that the availability of this option would be included in the information given to those commencing maternity leave and on a periodic basis in the quarterly Human Resources Updates for managers and in the Council's Insight e-magazine.

18 SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager reminded Members that the discussion topics for the December 2017 and March 2018 meetings were as follows:

December 2017 – Local Government Pension Scheme (The current position and planned changes); and

March 2018 – Apprenticeships (The future for apprenticeships, the Apprentice Levy, Public Sector Targets and Higher Apprenticeships).

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
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