

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 28 November 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.02 am and ended at 11.18 am

48 Public speaking

None.

49 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 May 2022 were confirmed as a true record.

50 Declarations of interest

Minute 57 District and Parish Council Elections – scale of fees
Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest; employed by Town and Parish councils.

51 Matters of urgency

None.

52 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

53 Review Reward update

The Committee received an update on the progress of the changes to the Council's grade and pay rates, known as the "Reward Review".

The report included the revised pay and grading structure, which reflected the Real Living Wage, and took account of the 2022/23 NJC Pay Award. The variations in policy would come into effect from 1 January 2023.

Work was ongoing with a small number of staff who were identified as being adversely affected by the proposals, with the progression of actions to resolve these by means of job evaluation review, new market supplements or pay protection.

The impact of the Reward Review will be measured through the regular people data reporting to the Committee and to the Senior Management Team. Particular focus will be on turnover and vacancy rates, and feedback from staff will also be sought. Other measures, such as a new recruitment video launch, and exploring an improved staff benefits officer, will run alongside the monitoring.

Comments from the Committee included:

- Positive comments on the recent recruitment video

- Low feedback from staff during the consultation period demonstrated comfort from the majority
- Welcomed steps to assist those adversely affected
- Thanks and appreciation for the vast work involved in bringing this work to the point of implementation
- Welcomed inclusion of the Real Living Wage
- Increase in pay made working for the authority more attractive for recruitment.

RESOLVED that the revised pay and grading structure and the next steps, including the methods to be used to evaluate impact, be noted.

54 **Monitoring Officer recruitment**

The committee considered the report of the Chief Executive, setting out the proposed recruitment arrangements and the requirements for selection. The Committee were asked to nominate members for the Interviewing Sub Committee, which was a requirement for the appointment of this statutory role. The Sub Committee would then recommend to Council, who would make the final appointment.

Aspects of the process were clarified for the committee, including the short listing process, and isometric testing. The interim arrangements were also welcomed. The Committee wanted to record their thanks to the outgoing Monitoring Officer for his service.

The committee were assured that the recruitment process, despite the difficulties expected by the consultants, would help deliver the best quality of candidates for the role. The revised job title and the recent agreed pay increase would also be included in the advertisement of the role.

The Chair advised that group members should carefully consider those members of the Personnel Committee best suited to the Interviewing Sub Committee, and advise the Chief Executive of that choice. The Committee agreed that the Interviewing Sub Committee should be chaired by the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Note the recruitment process to date, including use of an executive search agency to support this;
2. Confirm the requirement to convene the Interviewing Sub Committee (chaired by the Chair of Personnel Committee) as part of the recruitment and selection process and nominate members from the Personnel Committee to undertake this role.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the interim arrangements for the role of Monitoring Officer be approved.

55 **HR Policies Review to reflect Chief Officer Conditions of Service Model Procedures**

The HR Manager presented her report that set out the proposed changes to relevant HR policy, and consequential changes to the Constitution, to reflect the model procedures set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officer and Chief Executive conditions of service handbooks. This reflected the recommendations of the East of England Local Government Association's Learning Review.

The Vice Chair reflected that the updates took account of good practice and national guidelines, and supported the changes.

The Leader requested that a personal comment be recorded that he considered that the EELGA Learning Review should have interviewed all three of the stipulated consultees, rather than just the two who were actually consulted.

RESOLVED that the changes to HR policies and procedures, as set out in the report, are agreed.

RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL

That the Constitution be amended to reflect the consequential changes to those HR policies and procedures agreed by Personnel Committee on 28 November 2022.

56 **People Data Monthly Report**

The Committee received their update report on People Data. Sickness absence was highlighted as showing an increase, contributed to levels of Covid cases again, and an increase in cases relating to mental health. Work continues to help those staff, as well as help maintain the wellbeing of staff still in work, through the initiatives in place.

A suggestion was put forward to set a more aspirational target for filling vacancies; discussion took place on the measures in place to keep this below the standard 100 days, however factors such as periods of notice were out of the control of the authority. The Committee were reminded that monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators was regularly reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to endorse the content of the report.

57 **District and Parish Council Elections - Scale of Fees**

The Chief Executive presented his report outlining the response to the report of the internal auditors into Election Expenditure, namely a revised scale of fees for the 2023 elections and publication of the scale on the Council's website.

His report also sought agreement to recommend to Council an enhanced level of payment to Presiding Officers Poll Clerks and Count Staff. He outlined his experience of increased difficulty in recruiting election staff over recent years, the report setting out some of the factors that had led to this difficulty.

The Committee raised questions on the protection of election staff from confrontation or verbal abuse in polling stations. There was an acknowledgement that the role had increased pressure because of legislative changes requiring identification for voters. Selection of Presiding Officers was carefully made, as well as training provided to help provide those officers with the knowledge of their rights, and means of contact for assistance if required.

The Committee also raised the behaviour of tellers outside of polling stations, which could be over enthusiastic at times; again, the Chief Executive confirmed that the training to Presiding Officers included information about what tellers could undertake; and candidates and agents were encouraged to fully brief their tellers about what was acceptable.

In response to a question about a shortfall of election staff, the Committee were reassured that there were a number of interventions in place to deliver the election process; however, the level of commitment by individuals had diminished over the years. A level of pay that reflected the importance of the work, and the unsocial hours associated with the work, would go some way to resolve that.

RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL

1. That the updated Scale of Fees set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved and that when approved, the Scale of Fees is published on the Council's website;
2. That an enhanced level of payment to Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks and Count Staff as set out in the report, be approved.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

K Blakey
B De Saram
P Hayward
J Loudoun
N Hookway
E Wragg

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

None

Officers in attendance:

Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer
Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Councillor apologies:

M Allen
M Armstrong
D Bickley
I Hall

Chair

Date: