

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held online via zoom on 30 November 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.01 pm and ended at 3.20 pm

7 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

8 Minutes of the previous meeting 2 September 2021

The minutes of the consultative meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 2 September 2021 were agreed.

9 Declarations of interest

None.

10 Matters of urgency

None.

11 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

12 Recruitment and retention update

The HR Manager outlined to the committee the actions being progressed to mitigate against current recruitment and retention concerns. She outlined:

- The economic context, with low levels of unemployment and high vacancy rates, both nationally, and at local level;
- The agreed mitigations underway, including:
 - Independent reward review: an external consultant has been commissioned, with the intention to bring costed recommendations to the committee in January 2022 in order to be considered in the 2022/23 draft budget; Unison are involved in the review;
 - Recruitment strategy review: branding work to maximise supply of good candidates, including HR and managers making connections with recruitment agencies to understand their current offer;
 - “Grow our own” strategy: longer term strategy to have in place career pathways and strong apprenticeship schemes, planned to develop in two or three pilot areas. To aid this work, the Council has become a member of the South West Apprenticeship Ambassador Network.

The HR Manager was also pleased to announce to the committee that a HR graduate placement had been appointed to help deliver the actions outlined in the report.

The committee discussed:

- Welcoming the reward review and the work undertaken to date;
- Turnover data presented in statistical form needed to include numbers of staff, to set the percentage figures into context;
- In response to a question, no candidates had raised an issue of concern relating to the probability of unitary or government reorganisation;
- Links with East Devon secondary schools would be included as one of the actions, to promote the career paths of local government to school leavers;
- The process of applying market supplements was explained, including factoring the impact on existing staff.

The committee endorsed the report.

13 **Apprentice pay policy**

The report before committee set out changes to the current pay policy for newly recruited apprentices. The changes were proposed for the following reasons:

- Pay competitiveness in the local market
- “growing our own” strategy
- Council Plan priority one – better homes and communities for all
- Council Plan priority three – a resilient economy
- Maximise levy spend.

The committee agreed with the proposal.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That National Joint Council (NJC) rates are paid to newly recruited apprentices in accordance with the Council’s standard pay and grading structure.

14 **People data reporting proposals**

The report set out proposals for reporting people data to the committee. Such data will help inform policy decisions and retain oversight of the workforce.

The committee debated:

- Inclusion of age data so that the committee had an idea of when the impact of an aging workforce was likely to be acute;
- Reports to the Scrutiny Committee (as part of the key performance data) should continue, but the role of the Personnel Committee was to improve their skills in understanding human resources;
- Data sets should help inform succession planning;
- Key to have data that informs the work of the committee, and not to have excessive data that is either not specifically required or onerous to produce;
- Look to developing a format of presenting the data sets that helps both Members and officers in developing their HR plans;
- Benchmarking data welcomed to determine what areas need to be proactive, and what areas need a fresh approach;
- Useful to know the number of vacancies for each service.

The committee agreed in principle the data sets listed in the provided appendix 1 and 2, requesting that further work on the report format be undertaken by officers in conjunction with the Chair and the Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Co-ordination to bring back to the next meeting of the committee.

15 **Worksmart review update**

The HR Manager outlined the progress on the Worksmart review. The review had three areas of focus:

- How the council continues to meet customer needs
- How the council supports sustainability and mitigates against climate change
- How the council provides an attractive working environment that supports recruitment and retention, high performance, staff engagement and inclusion.

Staff would be updated before the Christmas break on the review; and work would continue in January on the principles of Worksmart, moving to prioritising actions to implement the revised approach.

The review was also closely linked with work on reviewing how customer service is delivered.

Comments included:

- Welcoming the holistic and inclusive approach to the review
- Need to clearly communicate to customers how their services would continue to be delivered
- Include in the focus for review the need for continuing efficiency
- Expectation of customers too from Councillors to be accessible via various means, such as viewing meetings online
- Care in supporting those staff who may have experienced mental health issues due to the pandemic, as they return to a hybrid approach of working.

The committee noted the report presented.

16 **Personnel Forward plan**

The committee noted the forward plan, with the addition of a future report on resourcing.

The timing of presenting the annual people data report would be considered in the context of budget planning.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)

M Allen

M Armstrong

D Bickley

K Blakey

B De Saram

P Hayward

R Lawrence

J Loudoun

N Hookway

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

G Jung
P Faithfull
E Rylance

Officers in attendance:

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

Councillor apologies:

V Ranger
I Hall

Chair Date: