

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at online via zoom on 27 January 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.51 am

17 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

18 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November 2021

The minutes of the consultative meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 30 November 2021 were agreed.

19 Declarations of interest

None declared.

20 Matters of urgency

None.

21 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

22 Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

The Committee are required to consider and make recommendations to Council on the Pay Policy Statement, on an annual basis. The revised statement presented to the Committee contained all information as required by the Localism Act.

The committee discussed:

- The ratio of lower to higher roles, which remains below the adopted rate of 10:1

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Pay Policy Statement for April 22 – March 23 be adopted.

23 Reward Review update

The report presented to Committee outlined the improvements identified by the independent reward review. Further work was required to determine how to implement those improvements and the budgetary impact those changes would have. The findings did highlight the good governance and controls in place to ensure pay fairness and transparency.

Benchmarking had revealed that some roles were not in sync with the job market. With agreement of the committee, work would continue with the consultants and the union to find ways of improving the structure to resolve the issues.

Comments from the committee included:

- Working within prepared budget for 2022/23;
- Concerns about existing staffing gaps as salaries were not attractive enough; the other benefits of the organisation were advertised to boost applications;
- A desire to look to becoming a Real Living Wage Employer.

The Committee requested the HR Manager to undertake further work on the Reward Review, including the development of detailed options and costings, with this additional work funded from existing related budget of 2022/23.

The Committee also agreed that no view was given at this stage about whether the Council should become a Real Living Wage Employer and instead, this should form part of the Reward Review options and costings.

RECOMMENDED to Senior Officer for approval:

That further work be undertaken on the Reward Review including the development of detailed options and costings, with this additional work funded from some of the monies already allocated to pay within the 2022/23 budget.

24 **People Data Report**

The committee received the report on workforce key data. The HR Manager highlighted the following to the committee:

- **Headcount** slightly reduced;
- **Vacancies and recruitment** slight decrease in vacancies, with the time taken to fill increasing slightly due to the Christmas period;
- **Market supplements** slightly reduced but still at a high level;
- **Agency workers** reduced in number;
- **Turnover** remains at around 1% per month;
- **Sickness absence** decreased.

The committee discussed:

- More detailed information on agency staff was held in individual services, but the HR team continued to work with services to understand how agency workers are used. Invariably agency workers were often required for seasonal needs;
- Specific skill shortages in local government in some areas and the need to ensure that the whole package of working for the local authority including the benefits, were promoted to attract candidates;
- Appreciation to all those involved for setting up the committee, which now helped highlight staffing data to Councillors to help support decision making.

The committee noted the report.

25 **Personnel Forward Plan**

Cllr Millar requested that his motion, originally put to the Overview Committee on 18 November 2021, be put on the Personnel Committee Forward Plan. The motion set out that a public register of interests for senior officers should be created and published.

The Monitoring Officer had commented on the submitted motion that “It is a legal requirement for member’s Register of Interests to be made publicly available. There is no such obligation in relation to employees of any level. All officers complete a register of interest that it is held by the Council. Consideration will need to be given to what level of

officer the disclosure would affect and in that regard the legal position and human rights / data protection considerations. If there was a recommendation to require this in relation to current officers, as opposed to in the future, it has the potential to affect the terms and conditions of employment and therefore it will need to involve discussion with the Union.”

The Chair advised that he did not consider that the motion was appropriate for the committee to investigate, particularly as there was no legal requirement to do so. Cllr Loudoun echoed this decision, in that he felt there was no benefit to undertaking such a register. In particular he highlighted the trust Councillors had put in Senior Officer to make decisions on their behalf, so that they may continue to meet virtually.

The Leader also agreed with the comments of the Chair and Cllr Loudoun, expressing that if he were an employee, he would question why such a register was required when Councillors and officers operated on trust.

In response, Cllr Millar commented that there were other authorities that held such a register, and that he was not implying any impropriety of officers. His motivation was to demonstrate to the public that there were no concerns. He commented that he took on board the comments of the committee.

The Chair welcomed that recognition. He stated that there was strong trust between leaders and senior officers, which was apparent from the evidence of working through the pandemic, keeping businesses going and keeping the public engaged through that difficult time.

The Chief Executive thanked the committee for their support; and confirmed that he had previous discussion with the union who were supportive of the comments made by the Chair.

The committee agreed the Forward Plan as set out in the agenda.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)
M Armstrong
P Arnott
K Blakey
B De Saram
R Lawrence
J Loudoun

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
D Ledger
P Millar

Officers in attendance:

Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Councillor apologies:

- V Ranger
- D Bickley
- I Hall
- N Hookway

Chair

Date: