

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Online via zoom on 22 March 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.33 pm

32 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

33 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the consultative meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 18 February 2022 were agreed.

34 Declarations of interest

Min 38. East of England Local Government Association - Learning Review.
Councillor Ian Thomas, Personal, was interviewed by the LGA team in connection with this item.

Min 38. East of England Local Government Association - Learning Review.
Councillor John Loudoun, Personal, was interviewed by the LGA team in connection with this item and commissioned the report. Receives a pension from Unison.

Min 38. East of England Local Government Association - Learning Review.
Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, was interviewed by the LGA team in connection with this item.

35 Matters of urgency

None

36 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one item that officers recommended should be dealt with in this way. This is recorded at minute 38.

37 Staff HSE Survey

The Chief Executive presented his report stating the council had recently concluded a second survey of staff utilising the recommended Health & Safety Executive questionnaire and reported the results and highlighted areas of work for the Committee to consider. He acknowledged in order to go forward the need to ensure continued working as one Council, where there was a collective responsibility to address the concerns raised in the survey. The Worksmart policy was currently being reviewed with increased emphasis on the 'Happy, Healthy, Here' programme. He stated consideration was needed to whether to renew the council's IIP accreditation as this had been the primary indicator in terms of visibly demonstrating the commitment to being an employer of choice. He acknowledged that flexibility was now a key draw to employees as there

was no more 'one size fits all' model and he added the council was more enlightened to new ways of working.

Discussions included the following:

- The IIP accreditation portrays the council as a strong employer and attracts suitable future employees.
- Staff see IIP as a commitment from the council to operate to the highest and best standards.
- Support for IIP but consideration needed to the additional work this entailed when staff workloads were already high.
- A report be produced to the Committee on the Happy, Healthy and Here initiative to answer previous concerns.
- Staff have cautiously acknowledged improvements that had been made as seen with additional resources approved in the Budget.
- The staff survey was an important snapshot at any one time, identifying issues from feelings of concern to ones of feeling positive.
- Was there retention/recruitment problems and was there not a backfill from present staff?
- Challenges for recruitment were unprecedented in the current market with people not wishing to move/relocate. Older people were taking earlier retirement due to lifestyle choices and less uptake from younger people to apprenticeships.
- The confidence in teams and individual employees was key to gauge how staff were doing/feeling.

RECOMMENDED to Senior Officer for approval:

1. That having regard to the results of the second survey that the work done to date on addressing the areas of concerns be endorsed and also recommends that a further survey is undertaken later this calendar year.
2. To endorse the renewal the council's IIP accreditation as this had been the primary indicator in terms of visibly demonstrating the commitment to being an employer of choice and attracting the right people for the right job.

38 **East of England Local Government Association - Learning Review**

The Monitoring Officer presented his report which provided the Learning Review commissioned by the Council following the resolutions of the extraordinary meeting of Council held on 9th February 2021.

The content of the report was discussed, part of which emphasised using the Learning Review to look forward. Members also discussed the extent to which the recommendations from the Learning Review should be made public. Members concluded that the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair, the Portfolio Holder for Council and Corporate Co-ordination and the Chief Executive, provide further detail in the Committee's recommendations to further expand on the EELGA recommendations.

RECOMMENDED to Senior Officer for approval:

That Recommendations 7.1.1 (current LGA support to improve relationships at the Council be continued) is noted & 7.4 (senior leaders to develop effective relationships for the benefit of the Council) is noted and endorsed given the comments of the Leader and Chief Executive in the meeting and the ongoing development work led by the LGA.

That Recommendations 7.1.2 (having clarity on the definition of consultation and member roles when being consulted and informal channels to resolve any disagreement) & 7.1.6 (considering whether to amend / supplement the Code of Conduct to support a more robust standard of conduct where genuine action is taken and regular training on member / officer roles) are referred to the Standards Committee for consideration.

That Recommendations 7.1.3 (enshrining the model procedure for discipline / grievances in the Council's policy and having a standing committee on employments matters), 7.1.4 (clear process in the Councils redundancy policy for dealing with senior redundancies linked to the procedure in the Constitution), 7.1.5 (that ill health cases are dealt with in accordance with relevant policy irrespective of other processes going on) to the extent the recommendations have not already been actioned are referred to the Head of Paid Service and Corporate HR Manager to progress in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Council Co-ordination.

That Recommendations 7.1.7 (policy on approaching the LGA for support where change in Leader / Administration or Chief Executive and a commitment to early engagement on various matters to ensure orderly transition and appropriate working practices being put in place) & 7.3 (senior officers to consider how they can give confidence to staff that relationships are improving and the role of statutory officers to be included in member induction) are referred to the Chief Executive to action and which shall include drafting an outline set of processes that will support any future new Administration or set of Portfolio Holders in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Council Co-ordination.

That Recommendation 7.2 (preparation of an induction programme for new Members / regular Member training on an annual basis on various topics and how Members can give confidence to the Membership that the relationships are improving) be referred to the Member Development Working Party for its consideration and action.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)
V Ranger (Vice-Chair)
M Allen
M Armstrong
P Arnott
D Bickley
F Caygill
B De Saram
I Hall
R Lawrence
J Loudoun
N Hookway

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

H Parr
J Bonetta
C Brown
S Chamberlain
M Chapman
P Faithfull
M Howe
B Ingham
D Ledger
M Rixson

J Rowland
E Rylance
P Twiss
J Whibley

Officers in attendance:

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer
Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)
Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Councillor apologies:

K Blakey

Chair

Date: