

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 6 February 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.16 am

58 Public speaking

None.

59 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2022

Cllr Arnott raised minute 55, HR Policies Review to reflect Chief Officer Conditions of Service Model Procedures. Whilst the paragraph on the EELGA Learning Review was an accurate reflection of the statement made in the meeting, he still felt that the Review document presented to Council was not accurate.

The Chair advised that he would take a vote on the minutes of the committee as a true record, and advised that the issue Cllr Arnott raised should be referred to Council under part B (confidential) session as the appropriate route.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record by the committee, with Cllr Arnott voting against and with one abstention.

60 Declarations of interest

None.

61 Matters of urgency

None.

62 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

63 Director recruitment update

The report of the Chief Executive outlined the recruitment process to date for the role of Director of Governance and Licensing (Monitoring Officer). Interim arrangements for the post had been agreed by the Committee at the previous meeting. The Interviewing (Chief Officers) Sub Committee would convene on the 7 February as part of the interviewing of candidates.

The report also set out a request for the Committee to confirm to convene the Interviewing (Chief Officers) Sub Committee as part of the recruitment and selection process for the Director of Housing, Health and Environment. The current post holder had advised of his planned retirement on August 2023.

The expected timeline for recruitment of this post was:

- February 2023 preparation and recruitment advertising commenced, with potential candidates approached by the agency;
- Mid March 2023 as the closing date for applications;
- Late March/early April Shortlisting and selection, including the Sub Committee interviews and full Council ratification;
- Employment commenced mid/late July 2023 subject to notice requirements.

Members comments included:

- Briefings in preparation for the interview process for the Director of Governance and Licensing were positive;
- Should the Director of Housing, Health and Environment post be reviewed prior to advertisement, because of the scale of the post covering such a wide service area – such as separating out the elements into different posts; in response, Members were informed that any post due to be advertised was reviewed to check that it still met the requirements. In the case of this Director post, the role of the Assistant Directors was key in managing the service areas, with the Director having a strategic role over the wider remit;
- Conflicting views across the committee in regard to the number of elected members involved in the recruitment process; on balance, the view was that the sub-committee level of seven members was the right level. Looking ahead to the recruitment of the Director of Housing, Health and Environment, the option of additional Member involvement prior to the work of the Sub Committee was offered as a possible process as part of the recruitment for that role.

RESOLVED

1. That the update on the recruitment of the Director of Governance and Licensing (Monitoring Officer) be noted;
2. That the requirement to convene the Interviewing (Chief Officers) Sub Committee for purposes of interviewing the post of Director of Housing, Health and Environment be confirmed;
3. That the Committee records their thanks to the Director of Housing, Health and Environment for his thoughtfulness in giving a long notice period of his retirement, in order to facilitate a hand over with his replacement.

64 Pay Policy Statement annual review

The report set out the annual review of the Council's Pay Policy Statement. The Committee were asked to consider the statement, which sets out the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees, in order to recommend to Council.

The changes to the Statement reflected the new grading structure agreed through the Reward Review. It also took into account the learning Review which incorporated the JNC Chief Officer model procedures into local policy.

The pay multiple, which is the relationship between the lowest and highest paid employees, was now at 5.9:1, a reduction on the previous year and within the Council's agreed maximum ration of 10:1.

In response to a question on the JNC Chief Officer model, the model was explained as a national document. Reference to that would be circulated to the Committee after the meeting, for information.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 be adopted.

65 **Apprentice Pay Policy revisions proposal**

The report from the HR Manager requested the Committee to support changes to the pay policy for newly recruited apprentices. The changes were in response to the Reward Review, to show distinction between apprenticeship and standard posts, and to keep such positions competitive in the employment market.

Member discussion included:

- Welcoming the positive step to provide apprentice schemes that are paid adequately and fairly;
- Where the majority of apprentice placements were within council services? In response, whilst the actual data was not at hand, many were in the placement of business administration and Streetscene operations. The Committee were also advised that such schemes were not just unique to new employees; existing employees could also undertake placements to further their career advancement;
- Positive enforcement of the message of the Council as a good employer.

RECOMMENDED to Council that new recruit apprentices are paid at 90% of the standard National Joint Council (NJC) rates as set out in the Council's pay and grading structure, with a minimum rate equivalent to the Real Living Wage.

66 **People data**

The report provided to the Committee set out key data on workforce for the Council.

Elements highlighted included:

- Headcount had a small increase to 526;
- Market supplements had reduced from 39 to 6 as at the end of 2022, with a further 2 agreed in January 2023 that will bring the total to 8. This was a direct impact of the Reward Review implementation;
- Vacancies stood at 47, compare to 58 in October 2022;
- Cumulative voluntary turnover had increased since October 2022 to 10.89%;
- A small decrease in FTE days lost due to sickness absence now standing at 0.96 days in December;
- A projected forecast of 11.61 FTE days lost to sickness absence for the year, although slightly reduced, but still above the target of 8.5 days.

The Committee were briefed on the continued issues of sickness, as reflected for many authorities and businesses nationally, due to continued Covid and flu infections; as well as mental health related issues. Training funded from the public health budget would be targeted at particular pinch points, with further updates being provided to the Committee on the success of that training, and if elements become part of the authority's Happy Healthy Here staff offer.

In response to questions, the HR service, working alongside managers and others, continue to provide support. In response to the changes to reception opening, the Committee were informed about the delivery of training relating to dealing with difficult customers. Such training was also being delivered where required across a number of services.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorsed the report.

67 **Personnel Forward Plan**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of work for the Committee. No items were added.

The timing of the Management Review in light of the Director of Housing, Health and Environment post becoming vacant, was questioned. In response, the outline of work following the District elections determined that the review would naturally follow the completion of the new Council Plan – which in turn would inform how the management structure would best fit to deliver the Plan.

Advice from PWC on assessing the impact of the Reward Review set out that a period of six to twelve months was required for the changes to bed in, after which a management review could follow.

The Chair closed the meeting with expressing thanks to the Committee for their contributions, and thanks to the officers attending.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)
P Arnott
K Blakey
B De Saram
A Dent
J Loudoun
N Hookway
E Wragg

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

J Bonetta

Officers in attendance:

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

Councillor apologies:

M Armstrong
D Bickley
I Hall

Chair

Date: