

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 17 October 2023

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.54 am and ended at 11.55 am

11 Public speaking

None.

12 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 July 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

13 Declarations of interest

Minute 19; Councillor Tim Dumper; Other Registerable Interest; Chartered Member of CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development). The interest did not prevent the Councillor taking part in the discussion.

14 Matters of urgency

None.

15 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

16 Investors in People

The Council first achieved Investor in People (IiP) accreditation in 2006, being awarded the Gold standard in 2012 and Platinum in 2019. In early 2023 the Council underwent reaccreditation, resulting in being awarded the Gold standards. The report before the committee set out the findings of that process and the next steps for continued improvement that would be taken into account for the Council Plan and the Peer Review work.

Aspects highlighted by the HR Manager included very positive responses on a wide range of aspects, with a need to look to set actions to further develop management capability in some areas. Capacity to undertake training had also been identified as needing further review.

Questions and comments from the committee included:

- the level of staff interaction with the process. The survey response rate was at 82%, and interviews had taken place with 42 employees across services as part of the accreditation process;
- Whilst the awarded standard was lower than the previous accreditation, the findings were still very positive in light of the impact of the pandemic on the workforce, and other pressures on services such as the difficulty in recruitment to vacant posts;

- The action plans from the findings would dovetail into the Peer Review work.

The Chair gave thanks to those employees that took part in the process and felt that the Gold standard was a good outcome, with many of the findings being positive.

RESOLVED that the findings be noted and the proposed actions endorsed.

17 **People data report**

The committee considered their regular update on key people data. The update aims to inform policy decisions and to provide an overview of workforce matters.

Questions and comments from the committee included:

- Use of market supplements to boost salaries to attract/retain staff. Whilst this was an option, previous work relating to the Reward Review had highlighted how these supplements could adversely impact on the pay structure. Market supplements were considered, along with other factors, in working towards filling vacancies and required pay benchmarking evidence from the wider market as part of the consideration. In response to a question about planning officers, Members were informed that benchmarking had shown the salaries offered were in line with the same positions elsewhere; the main problem stemmed from a lack of suitably qualified candidates. It was noted that there no current market supplements within Housing, although this may change if circumstances require it;
- The committee were reminded of other measures taken, such as apprenticeships and training to promote within existing teams;
- A range of options under the “Healthy Happy Here” banner were available, and promoted to staff. Sickness levels were in line with other local authorities, but work continued to reduce those levels;
- Clarity was sought on the apparent large increase in finance service employees, but this was due to the realignment of reporting from another service – effectively the number had moved from another service area.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorsed the report.

18 **HR Team update**

The committee were reminded of the service provided by the HR Team, including the delivery of HR and payroll for Strata Service Solutions Ltd and payroll for some town councils. The Payroll and HR Support Manager is retiring at the end of the year, and an appointed replacement will start at the end of October. This will enable a handover period for this key role. An assistant payroll post was also due to go before Council for approval.

The team had gradually increased while moving to more proactive work, including the appointment of an HR apprentice.

The HR Manager noted the hard work and support of the team in the two years since she had joined the Council, including the work they had done to implement key projects such as the Reward Review.

The Chair welcomed the progression of the team.

RESOLVED to note the update on the HR Team.

19 **Chief Executive Recruitment**

The committee considered a late report on the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive, following the announcement of the retirement of the current post holder.

The report set out the processes involved, utilising the same agency previously engaged to recruit to the two recent Director posts. A timeframe for the process was also presented in the report for the consideration of the committee.

The process would also include the involvement of the Interviewing Sub Committee, a politically balanced committee drawn from the Personnel Committee membership.

Discussion took place on the timetable presented. A proposal was put forward to amend the timetable, for reasons of the Peer Review taking place in February 2024 and for the Council to reflect on the outcomes of that review.

The timetable would therefore reflect that the closing date for applications for the post would be put back to Friday 5 April 2024, with the subsequent timeframe being adjusted by the HR Manager accordingly. This would result in the commencement of employment (subject to notice requirements) May – August 2024.

The committee were in agreement to this amendment in timeframe and the subsequent detail of dates within that process being confirmed by the HR Manager.

RESOLVED

1. That the timeframe be amended to adjust the closing date for applications to Friday 5 April 2024, with subsequent adjustment as required;
2. That the requirement to convene the Interviewing Sub Committee as part of the recruitment and selection process for the post be confirmed, and names put forward as soon as possible to support recruitment planning.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

E Rylance (Chair)
J Loudoun (Vice-Chair)
P Arnott
K Blakey
V Bonetta
M Chapman
T Dumper
P Faithfull
D Haggerty
P Hayward
N Hookway
S Richards
E Wragg

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow

C Brown

Officers in attendance:

Simon Davey, Director of Finance

Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager

Tracy Hendren, Director of Housing, Health and Environment

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Andrew Melhuish, Democratic Services Manager

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance & Licensing (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

M Hartnell

M Martin

Chair

Date: