

AGENDA ITEM NO:4

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2010 AT 2.00 P.M.**

A Councillor Comer
P Councillor Bees
A Councillor Eddy
P Councillor Negus
P Councillor Popham(in the Chair)

**HR
78.3/10 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Eddy, who was substituted by Councillor Windows, and Councillor Comer who was substituted by Councillor Wright.

**HR
79.3/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**HR
80.3/10 MINUTES – HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 25TH
FEBRUARY 2010**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 25th February 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**HR
81.3/10 PUBLIC FORUM**

The following items of public forum were received:

AGENDA ITEM	AUTHOR OF STATEMENT	SUBJECT(S) OF STATEMENT	No.
n/a	UNISON	Consultants	1
5		Managing Change Policies	
6		People (Workforce) Strategies	
7		Use of Resources (CAA)	
8		Sickness Absence Support Line	
9		Integrated Learning and Development Programme	
5	UNITE	Managing Change Policies	2
7		Use of Resources	
8		Sickness Absence Support Line	
10		Residential Futures: Ring Fences	
n/a	GMB	Openness and Transparency	
5		Managing Change Policies	
6		People (Workforce) Strategies	
7		Use of Resources (CAA)	
8		Sickness Absence Support Line	
9		Integrated Learning and Development Programme	
10		Residential Futures: Ring Fences	

10	Sarah Cooke	Residential Futures: Ring Fences	4
6	Ian Scott	People (Workforce) Strategies	5
7		Use of Resources (CAA)	
9		Integrated Learning and Development Programme	

It was noted that the public forum statements that referred to agenda items would be received immediately prior to the item to which they referred.

Consultants - It was noted that a report about consultants (and interim managers) would be presented to the next meeting of the HR Committee in June 2010. The report would include information for (the whole of) the financial year 2009/10 (including the cost of consultants and interim managers engaged in the transformation programme).

HR

82.3/10

REVISIONS TO THE MANAGING CHANGE POLICIES (BCC & LMS)

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 5) to approve revised Managing Change Policies for the Council and for Schools.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Restructure often took place within a tight timescale which could be held up by the counter appeal system in place. The new policy proposed a more streamlined system and a collective approach to the resolution of appeals.
- The policy would be kept under review and monitored.
- There were very few cases of service reviews and the onus would be on managers to make service reviews and benefits clear.
- Pay protection was a benefit within Bristol City Council and not an employer obligation. Any review would

- involve proper consultation.
- If Bristol City Council policies were accepted by a school, training and advice was offered to School Governors to help them in their role. The majority of schools accepted the policies of the Council.
 - Members believed it was important to ensure a full transfer of knowledge with School Governors rather than simply the offer of training. Officers confirmed that the Governor Development programme was subject to frequent review.
 - In response to concerns it was agreed that the sentence "*...if their post is substantially affected by this externalisation process*" be added to the end of paragraph 11 of the policies.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the revised Managing Change Policies for the Council and for Schools, as set out in Appendices A and B of the report be approved, with the agreed addition;**
 - (2) that the implementation date of 1st April 2010 for the Council's version be approved;**
 - (3) that the Governing Bodies be requested to recommend the adoption of the Schools version with effect from 1st September 2010; and**
 - (4) that the phased implementation for Methods of Appointment, as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report, be noted.**

HR

83.3/10

WORKFORCE PEOPLE STRATEGY 2010/15

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 6) which requested the approval of the People Strategy 2010-15

with effect from 1 April 2010.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Union submissions highlighted that apprentices often, especially when under 19 years, earned less than the minimum wage.
- Officers confirmed that the modern apprenticeship scheme was a national scheme. There had been 70 training opportunities created to date and it was a valuable route into the City Council for young people.
- The Council, through the HR Committee, had introduced travel expenses to help the financial situation of all apprentices.
- Members requested a report with options for how apprentices could be paid the minimum wage. Officers were asked to find out how much it would cost and list the implications.
- The first wave of apprentices had been in the scheme for six months. Officers were also asked to find out how many of the apprentices had secured full employment.
- Officers confirmed that the first phase of the equal pay review had been consulted upon and agreed in 2006. The second phase would be discussed by the Joint Employees Relations Board.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the People Strategy 2010-15 be approved with effect from 1 April 2010.**
 - (2) An additional report be submitted to the Committee in June 2010 to outline;**
 - (a) the implications of awarding the national minimum wage to apprentices aged under 19 years**
 - (b) the employment paths of apprentices who had finished the scheme, and whether any had secured other jobs with the council.**

84.3/10 USE OF RESOURCES - COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 7) which requested endorsement of the evidence submitted in respect of the HR element of the Use of Resources Assessment.

Councillor Negus left the meeting during the item.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- There had been no industrial disputes in relation to the transformation programme and restructure.
- The issues raised within the TU submissions of public forum would be considered within the meeting with inspectors on 9th April 2010.
- Officers agreed to meet with the Learning Partnership Group in the next few weeks.
- Officers confirmed that the results of the Council Staff Satisfaction Survey were available and would be discussed at the next monthly TU/Officer meeting.
- It was reported that the Council Self-Peer review by the iDea had been positive.

RESOLVED - that the evidence submitted in respect of the HR element of the Use of Resources Assessment be noted.

Councillor Negus returned during the following item.

HR 85.3/10 SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT LINE

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no.8) relating to the pilot Sickness Absence Support line operated from 2 February 2009 until 31 January 2010.

Following the end of the pilot, it was important that sickness absence rates did not rise. Managers would be reminded of their responsibility in terms of sickness absence and further training sessions for managers would take place.

It was reported that the Strategic Leadership Team had noted the success of the scheme and asked that a small working party (including Occupational Health, HR and Customer Services officers) investigate whether a similar service could be provided in-house. If not, there remained the option to procure the services of an external company. A report on the findings would be available within a few weeks. Any new scheme should be flexible and specifically targeted at sickness 'hotspots'.

It was confirmed that an inhouse survey sent to managers (presented as Appendix C) had shown that a real time monitor of sickness information was not widely utilised by managers.

The committee strongly believed that the pilot scheme had been successful as the service had cost approximately £70,000 and saved £352,690 (a figure derived from a per hour cost for staff), and were surprised that it had been discontinued.

Officers confirmed that detailed information regarding the savings made were not available as;

- (a) efforts had already been in place to maintain improved sickness rates within Health and Social Care, after the pilot scheme.
- (b) other costs were also involved such as the specific cost of cover by agency staff for vacant posts, frozen because of impending home closures.
- (c) there had also been an overall downturn in sickness absence across the whole Council during the same period as the pilot.

Members requested more information including a cost benefit analysis of the scheme and accepted that any figure would be an approximation and with caveats.

In response to public forum submissions, it was confirmed that staff had contact with medically trained professionals through the pilot scheme. The working party would consider whether the Occupational Health team could work in the same capacity. Customer Service staff within Shared Transaction Services would not provide medical advice.

It was confirmed that sickness continued to be recorded and categorised and reports presented to the quarterly meetings

of the Corporate Employees Health and Safety Consultative Committee.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that a report be presented to the Committee in July 2010 on the outcomes of the review**
 - (2) that the views of the Human Resources Committee are conveyed to the SLT**
 - (3) that further information be presented on the cost benefit of the scheme.**

HR

86.3/10

ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEGRATED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION/STRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 9) setting out the progress that has been made to date and future plans for the Learning and Development Review.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Officers confirmed that the Learning Partnership Group would be involved in the plans, and also that there would continue to be a commitment to union learning.
- It was confirmed that the changes within City of Bristol College and the impact of the cut in funding was on the agenda of the next Joint Employees Relations Board.
- The proposals would bring together the learning and development function across the Council. Such moves would develop capacity within the workforce. The savings would not be made from cuts to services but from the benefit of a central budget to deliver services to employees.
- Phase One would set up the management structure, and once that was in place, Phase Two would look at NVQs and Health and Social Care training provision. Phase One would create the capacity to move to subsequent phases.

RESOLVED - that the progress made on

establishing an integrated Learning and Development function be noted.

HR

87.3/10

RESIDENTIAL FUTURES - CLARIFICATION OF RING FENCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 10) in response to previous resolutions regarding Residential Futures and for approval of the revised Management of Change: "Methods of Appointment" process as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

Officers clarified the revised arrangements for redeployment process and ring fences following the dispute hearing held on the 5th January 2010. The five stage process would be;

- (1) In the lead up to closure/refurbishment all posts would be ringfenced in the first instance to existing staff within the specific workgroup based at the building.
- (2) after completion of (1), any displaced employees would be directly appointed to suitable alternative posts in other EPH's/RC's
- (3) any relevant vacant posts arising through normal turnover would be offered through the New Opportunities Programme in line with the Council's obligation to offer posts to employees currently at risk.
- (4) if not filled, the vacancies would then be advertised within the overall EPH workgroup to those who were not currently at risk, but who may be at a later stage.
- (5) thereafter, posts not filled internally, would be advertised externally.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The use of agency staff, other than for very short term cover (sickness) would be discontinued due to government regulations on the use of temporary workers.
- Posts filled by an agency staff member continued to be defined as a 'vacant' unless they were to cover an absence due to sickness.
- In response to the concern for workers in homes not due to close until the end of the process, it was

reported that the turnover of staff was quite high and vacancies would be made available, as outlined above, and advertised in the staff newsletter.

- Officers were keen to retain staff and to keep services running at a high standard.
- The council also wanted to avoid any redundancies or early retirement and the associated cost to the council.
- It was possible, that whilst permanent appointments could be confirmed in alternative homes, start/transfer dates could be deferred to retain effective staffing levels at the home facing closure.
- Likewise, management will make posts available to staff not yet at risk, taking into consideration service delivery requirements.

RESOLVED - that the report be noted.

HR

88.3/10

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Members were asked to consider an application from the GMB to stay for the discussions within agenda item 12.

It was agreed to invite the GMB to remain, as the information contained within the report related to individuals that were GMB members of the dispute heard on the 5th January 2010.

RESOLVED - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended).

HR

89.3/10

RESIDENTIAL FUTURES - MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES/DISPLACED EMPLOYEES

(Exempt under paragraph 1 - Information relating to an individual)

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director - Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy (agenda item no. 12) in

response to the committee's previous resolutions from its meeting held on 5th January 2010.

The Committee were informed of actions taken to secure suitable alternative employment for displaced employees from the first home closure.

The Committee asked that employees be reminded of the terms and conditions of employment including pay protection and substantive post hours.

The Committee asked to be kept up to date of progress relating to the posts and redeployment of those staff members.

The GMB were presented with a list of current vacancies and were invited to inform officers of any they were aware of that were not listed.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the report be noted**
 - (2) that the Committee be kept informed of progress of efforts to redeploy those staff members from Hollybrook who had not yet secured alternative employment.**

(The meeting ended at 4.25 pm)

CHAIR