

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2014 AT 2.00 p.m.**

P Councillor Eddy
P Councillor Hance
P Councillor Langley
P Councillor Morgan
P Councillor Payne
P Councillor Wollacott

Also in attendance: Cllr Geoff Gollop in his capacity as Assistant Mayor responsible for Finance and Corporate Services.

**HR
37.01/14 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS (agenda item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillor Wollacott who would be late to the meeting. Councillor Hance chaired the meeting until his arrival.

**HR
38.01/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (agenda item 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**HR
39.01/14 MINUTES - HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 14 NOVEMBER
2013 (agenda item 4)**

RESOLVED -

That the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 14 November 2013 (including the exempt section) be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**HR
40.01/14 PUBLIC FORUM (agenda item 5)**

Public forum items were received from UNITE and the GMB in relation to agenda items 6, 7 and 8. Copies have been placed in the committee minute book.

Questions included within the GMB statement for item 7 had not been received within the deadline for written reply (CMR 9.3) however officers had agreed to address points raised within the verbal presentation of the report.

HR

41.01/14 ORGANISATION RESTRUCTURE UPDATE (agenda item 6)

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Human Resources updating the Committee on the progress on the organisation restructure since the last meeting and the proposed activities for the next phase.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main points were raised / noted:

- Members were pleased that regular meetings with the unions were taking place each Wednesday, and officers welcomed their positive engagement.
- The new third tier structure would be finalised and communicated shortly prior to a 45 day consultation period. Twenty one applications for voluntary severance had been accepted at tier three. Offers had been sent to applicable staff on grades ten to fifteen.
- Some staff were exempt from offers of voluntary severance, for example roles that had been through the process already or were difficult to recruit to. Public health staff would progress by an alternative timeline and were funded through government grant rather than the Council's general fund.
- Officers explained that the cost of severance was based on age and length of service. A general rule of thumb was that applications could not be accepted if it would take longer than 12 months to repay the costs. This would be largely due to the strain on the pension fund. So far, only two applications had been declined.

RESOLVED -

That the progress on the Organisation Restructure since the last meeting and the proposed activities for the next phase be noted.

HR

42.01/14 WORKFORCE DASHBOARD - METRICS AND ANALYSIS AS AT 30TH NOVEMBER 2013 (agenda item 7)

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Human Resources which provided an overview of organisational performance against a range of workforce measures.

During the discussion the following points were highlighted and clarified:

- The workforce dashboard enabled tracking of the effectiveness of measures such as the People Panel and control of the appropriate use of agency and casual staff. The report compiled data collected and presented it via an excel spreadsheet. Members requested they continue to receive A3 sized colour copies.
- The £6m budgeted for the cost of redundancy as noted within table 3 did not represent the cost of the current exercise but for the current year and mostly relevant to costs within Health and Social Care. The cost of removing £27m from the workforce budget was not represented within the table.
- Table 13 outlined compliance with 'return to work' interviews following sickness absences. These should be recorded through the HR Vision programme and it had been identified that interviews took place more often than those recorded. Work had been undertaken to remind managers of their responsibilities.
- The end of year seasonal rise in sickness absence rates was normal and could be attributed to flu, however, officers would track any changes paying particular attention to the sickness absence rates attributed to stress factors. Sickness absence rates within private sector businesses tended to be approx. six days, however, local government organisations were not directly comparable to private sector businesses as smaller organisations did not pay sick pay for the first three days, and some larger organisations did not declare their rates.
- Sickness of over four weeks made up around 50% of absence and 120 people accounted for half of the absence. Trigger points included the number of times absent as well as the number of days. Length of sickness was in some cases linked to grievance or disciplinary processes which needed effective management. The length of time before cases were heard by the Appeals Committee was of concern.

The Committee thanked officers for the report and asked to receive the information two to three times a year, no longer than four months apart.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted

HR 43.01/14 MARKET SUPPLEMENT FOR SERVICE DIRECTOR: FINANCE POST (agenda item 8)

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director, Human Resources setting out the justification for re-advertising the Service Director – Finance post.

During the item, Councillor Wollacott arrived and took the Chair, and Councillor Hance left the meeting.

During the discussion the following points were highlighted:

- It was clarified that the Pay Policy (as agreed by HR Committee in October 2009) stated that the Selection Committee (along with the Head of Paid Service and following recruitment advice) had the authority to award, revise or discontinue market supplements for 1st and 2nd tier posts. In other instances the HR Committee had the authority. The policy allowed for timely decisions and actions to take place that would otherwise be disadvantaged by waiting for the next meeting of the HR Committee.
- The Pay Policy stated that those decisions made by the Selection Committee would then be reported to HR Committee for ongoing monitoring and review. Members requested the ongoing custom and practice be that the decision of Selection Committee be 'in principle' and that an email be sent to HR leads for agreement and subsequent ratification at HR Committee to follow. As such, the second recommendation of the report was proposed to change to 'noted and approved'.
- It was reported that in the instance outlined, the Selection Committee were not prepared to make an appointment and following advice from HR officers and recruitment agency, the post be re-advertised with a market supplement. As the exempt appendix was not discussed, the Committee did not move into exempt session.
- The award would be non-consolidated and reviewed in line with the market at the time and in line with the pay policy.

RESOLVED -

- (1) that it be noted that a previous recruitment exercise to source the Service Director – Finance post (which also holds the Section 151 Responsibility) resulted in an insufficiently strong field for this crucial role, with many potentially strong candidates stating the salary as being a significant factor in their failure to apply.**
- (2) that it be noted and approved that, at the meeting of the Selection Committee (shortlisting panel) held on 9th December 2013, the decision was taken by the Members of the Panel and the Head of Paid Service, following appropriate advice, to re-advertise the post with a market supplement, bringing the salary up to a possible £99000 per annum.**

HR

44.01/14 URGENT BUSINESS

Paul Arrigoni Service Manager - Business Change & IT and Ian Gale Service Manager - Service Delivery and Integration, were welcomed to the meeting. The Head of HR introduced the item with reference to the budget amendment of February 2013 which withdrew overtime payments to those of grades BG11 and up.

The Committee had been advised of a number of operational issues as part of the update to the previous meeting (Nov 2013). Following the policy change at Budget Council it had become necessary to consider exemptions for a selection of work areas which were no longer able to implement temporary measures, use TOIL arrangements or rely on the goodwill of employees.

There were identified implications and risks to continuing with the non payment of overtime for some staff within the Business Change and IT Service. For example, some maintenance of ICT systems would now have to take place within working hours which would result in some packages being inaccessible to the public during those times as well as employees unable to work, resulting in inefficient work patterns.

The Head of HR reported that he was due to make an officer delegated decision to pay these groups overtime at a cost of £45k and asked for the support of the HR Committee. The HR Committee agreed with the case as presented and asked for a written report to the next meeting exploring the longer term delivery options and details of exemptions now awarded.

HR

45.01/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED -

That the date of the next Human Resources Committee meeting is scheduled for 27th February 2014 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.

CHAIR