



AGENDA ITEM NO 4

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

Thursday 13 November 2014

Human Resources Members Present:

Councillors Richard Eddy, Mike Langley, Tim Leaman, Daniella Radice, Naomi Rylatt, Mike Woollacott (Chair)

Officers in attendance:

Richard Billingham, - Service Director Human Resources, Alex Holly – People Business Partner, Ruth Quantock, Democratic Services Officer

Cllr Simon Cook – Assistant Mayor for Business Change, Resources and the Arts was also in attendance.

29. Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

There were no apologies and there were no substitutions.

30. Declarations of Interest

None.

31. Urgent Business

None.

32. Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on the 11 September 2014.

Cllr Eddy pointed out that he had taken part in the discussion but had declined to vote in respect of item 10 Taking forward the living wage proposals.

Resolved: that subject to the above amendment the minutes be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 Action Sheet

The Committee considered the rolling Action Sheet and it was agreed that the items marked 'Complete' were indeed complete and could therefore come off the list before the next meeting. **Action RQ**

34 Public Forum

The following Public Forum items were received in relation to:

Agenda item 8 - Ending of overtime payments to staff graded at BG11 and above

Agenda item 9 – Organisation Restructure

1. Written statement from Unison
2. Written statement from GMB

It was agreed that these statements be considered alongside the relevant agenda item.

35 Impact of Doncaster Judgement

In response to the circulation of the Doncaster Case to Members following the last meeting, some email correspondence had taken place between the Chair and the Deputy Monitoring Officer which was circulated to the Committee for information. The DMO had already agreed to produce a briefing note for the next meeting to address the issues raised by the Chair. It was noted that any further issues that Members wished to be covered in the briefing note should be emailed to the DMO by end of December at the latest. **Action: Members of HR Committee**

Members also requested further information on any recommended reading to help prepare for the discussion at the next meeting. **Action: AH to forward request to DMO**

36 Further update report on the ending of overtime payments to staff graded at BG11 or above

The Committee considered an update report on the ending of overtime payments to staff graded at BG11 or above.

The Committee noted public forum statements from Unite and GMB and in particular issues raised about how services outside of normal working hours will be resourced and concerns that an alternative solution could be more expensive.

The following key issues were noted during the discussion that took place:-

- The overtime expenditure tabled in the report excluded payments resulting from employees undertaking standby and call-out duties outside of normal working hours
- Line Managers are responsible for submitting and authorising any overtime claims via the council's payroll system. People Business Partners continue to investigate and challenge as necessary instances where overtime appears to have been paid outside of council policy.
- The business case for any exceptional circumstances must be signed off by the relevant Strategic Director and approved by the People Panel.
- Members commented that the overtime policy needed to be flexible in critical or urgent situations. It was agreed that this would be picked up as part of Pay Policy Statement to be considered by HR Committee in February for recommendation to Council in March 2015. **Action: RB**
- Members indicated that updates on the impact of this policy change were useful and wished to continue to receive regular update in future (annual / 6 monthly?). **Action: RQ to add to work programme.**

Resolved: that the report be noted.

37 Organisation Restructure

The Committee considered a report on the progress of the Organisation Restructure which has been running in phases since October 2013 and the details relating to its completion.

Richard Billingham gave a presentation which highlighted some of the key outcomes and the impact of the restructure on the workforce. A closure report is currently being drafted to capture the main achievements of the organisation restructure and any lessons that have been learned, with input from Managers and Trade Unions.

The Committee noted public forum statements from Unite and GMB and in particular issues raised about the VS process.

The following key issues were noted during the discussion that took place:-

- The restructure has been a council run process supported by internal officers which was a proud achievement. It was noted that an interim external advisor had been used in the absence of the Service Director HR for a temporary period. Information relating to the cost of this appointment would be included in the final report.
- Engagement and Communications had been key throughout the process, reaching out to staff through briefings and staff sessions and regular weekly meetings with Trade Unions.
- The impact of the restructure on the demographic of the workforce is that the organisation is younger than it was previously but other categories have not been significantly affected.

- Absence had been monitored throughout the period of the restructure to identify trends and develop appropriate supporting strategies. The Employee Assistance Programme has been promoted as a key source of confidential support for employees. Overall there has been a slight year on year increase in absence rates but levels remain well below levels recorded 2010 – 2013 (absence is also regularly reported to HR Committee through Workforce Dashboard/Statistics).
- Some concerns were raised by Members that as a complete top-to-bottom restructure had taken place within such a short period of time (13 months), the loss of skills and experience resulting from 607 voluntary severance leavers would impact on the employees remaining in the new structure and it was therefore important that stress and absence be monitored closely over the next 12 months.
- It was suggested that lessons learned during the organisation restructure should be shared with colleagues and Members involved in the Better Care Fund Programme. **Action: RB**

Resolved: that the report and progress be noted.

39 The role of the People Panel and how this relates to the functions of the HR Committee

Richard Billingham gave a verbal update on the role of the People Panel. He explained that he was Chair of this Panel which met weekly to ensure that costs were not been adding back in to the establishment by considering requests for overtime, use of agency staff, recruitment etc. It was noted that a TU representative also sits on the Panel and a Member of HR Committee would be welcome to participate on a regular basis or just come along to observe at some stage in the future.

The Committee requested some key statistics arising from the work/decisions of the People Panel for the next meeting in January 2015. Based on the info presented, Members will then decide how often they would like to see this information presented to HR Committee. **Action: RB**

40 AOB

It was agreed that AOB would be added to the end of future agendas as a standard item for the purpose of briefly sharing information or raising issues for further discussion at a future meeting.

- Changes to maternity / paternity leave. It was noted that a new system of shared parental leave will be introduced nationally on or after 5th April 2015. It was confirmed that the impact of changes to the current policy would be reported to a future HR Committee as part of the standard agenda item 'update on policy changes'. **Action: RQ to put a reminder on the work programme for update at next meeting.**

- Living Wage
 - Apprentices. Members requested a report to the next meeting (no. of apprentices by Directorate, what would be the cost of lifting Year 1 & Year 2 Apprentices to the living wage?)
 - it was noted that the Living Wage Foundation was available to do a presentation on 8th December 2014. Rather than holding an extraordinary HR Committee, Members suggested hold a briefing session instead and opening it up to all Members. Some Members indicated that 8th was not a good date so it was agreed that other dates would also be explored.

Date of Next Meeting

15 January 2015 at 1.30 pm

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm

Chair