



AGENDA ITEM NO 4

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

Thursday 22 January 2015

Human Resources Members Present:

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

Officers in attendance:

Richard Billingham - Service Director Human Resources, Alex Holly – People Business Partner, Shahzia Daya – Service Manager, Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Helen Sinclair-Ross – Change and Performance Manager and Ruth Quantock, Democratic Services Officer

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

41. Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions

There were no apologies and there were no substitutions.

42. Declarations of Interest

None.

43. Urgent Business

None.

44. Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on the 13 November 2014.

Members who had attended the Living Wage Foundation presentation on 8th December 2014 indicated that it had been very helpful and informative.

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

45 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**

46 Public Forum

The following Public Forum items had been received:-

Agenda Item	Author of Statement/Question	Subject of Statement	No
8 & 9	Steve Crawshaw, Bristol UNISON	8 – Senior Leadership Development 9 – Workforce Statistics	1
8, 9 & 10	Steve Paines UNITE	8 – Senior Leadership Development 9 – Workforce Statistics 10 – Living Wage & BCC Apprentices	2

It was agreed that these statements be considered alongside the relevant agenda item. A copy of the statements and responses to questions are available in the Minute Book held by Democratic Services.

47 Elected Mayor and executive – Powers and responsibilities

The Committee considered a briefing note which had been prepared by the Deputy Monitoring Officer in response to a request from the Committee for further clarification of the powers and responsibilities of the elected Mayor and Executive following the Doncaster Judgement.

In response to a comment, the Deputy Monitoring Officer clarified that in order to challenge a decision of the Mayor relating to setting the budget; the Council will need a two-thirds majority vote in favour of the challenge.

Resolved: that the briefing note be noted.

48 Senior Leadership Development

The Committee considered a report which set out the measures undertaken and planned to ensure that following the outcome of the restructure, the capability and capacity of senior managers is actively developed to meet the current and future requirements for effective leadership of the organisation.

The Committee noted public forum statements from Unite and Unison and in particular the issues raised about resourced development programmes being made available to all employees of the Council.

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

- It was confirmed by officers that the closure report for the restructure will be available for the June meeting of HR Committee.
- Future reports to this Committee will detail the approach to building capability and capacity across Service Managers and then the wider workforce.
- Some work had already been undertaken with Unite and City of Bristol College, however it was acknowledged that for some people in the lower grades having basic skills was still an issue which needed to be addressed.
- In response to a question it was confirmed that from 2nd February 2015, all senior level posts will be permanent ie no interim positions. It was confirmed that a report on the use of Interims and agency staff before and after the organisational restructure would be brought to a future meeting of HR Committee. **Action: RB**
- Some concerns were raised that with the significant turnaround of staff at senior level, the organisation has little memory now.
- One Member indicated that local traffic management schemes to be delivered to the Neighbourhood Partnerships were on hold because there was not enough capacity within the Highways team and asked whether there were plans to extend them. In response, Richard Billingham agreed to find out. **Action RB.**

Resolved: that the report be noted.

49 Workforce Statistics / HR Dashboard

The Committee considered an update on key issues in the HR Workforce Dashboard in particular relating to Workforce FTE and expenditure, Recruitment and Turnover and Sickness Absence.

The Committee noted public forum statements from Unite and Unison and in particular the issues raised about the level of sickness absence with anxiety, stress and depression being the greatest reasons for absence.

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

- Graph 5 - short and long term absence (working days lost) did not differentiate between short and long term so the overall figures were distorted. It was requested that a further breakdown be provided to Members. **Action AH**
- Table 13 – managing absence compliance. Concerns were raised about the low level of compliance with the council’s managing attendance policy demonstrated by the 7% figure for return to work interviews being conducted. In response officers explained that following the restructure, the issue was being able to physically record the data as the HR system was currently being re-modelled to reflect the new structure. Once implemented a report on the new system and attendance would be brought to the HR Committee in due course. **Action RB**
- Members indicated that following the restructure, the reduction in the number of employees delivering services was evident by the increase in the number of complaints/feedback to local Councillors. It was important in terms of efficiency and reducing costs for simple things to be accessed on-line by the public. It was confirmed that the Business Change project would be looking at this as part of the next phase.
- Table 4 – Movement. It was requested that further information be made available to Members on the reasons for leaving the employment of the council. **Action RB**

Resolved: that the report be noted.

50 Living Wage and Bristol City Council Apprentices

The Committee received an update and were asked to consider the impact of paying the ‘Living Wage’ to apprentices in their third year (an additional £13,637 per annum) and the impact of paying all Apprentices the Living Wage (an additional £470,743 per annum).

The Committee noted public forum statements from Unite and Unison and in particular the issues raised about introducing annual incremental payments towards the Living Wage as an incentive for Apprentices to successfully complete their placements.

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

- There are currently 71 Bristol City Council Apprentices and a new recruitment campaign will be launched in 2015.
- Apprentices are not covered by the provisions of the Living Wage, however they have benefitted from a ‘one off’ payment of £250 as a gesture which recognises their contribution.
- The Council has a lead role to play in ensuring Bristol’s young people have access to training and work experience opportunities across the City.
- The cost of paying apprentices a ‘Living Wage’ would make employing an apprentice less attractive than advertising a substantive role on Bristol grades. This is because they would be paid the same as an experienced or qualified employee, without being able to offer the necessary skills, knowledge and experience.

- The comment was made that there is a stark difference between the cost of paying the Living Wage to Apprentices in Year 2 and paying them in Year 3. In response, officers explained that completion of year 2 is equivalent to NVQ2 and there is then an option to extend to Year 3 for NVQ3 qualification. A number of Apprentices do not go on to the third year.
- One Member pointed out that Apprenticeships are training opportunities and designed to offer the opportunity to develop skills which enhance the employability of the Apprentice, therefore the current rate should be unchanged.
- Given the pressure on workforce cost at present and the ongoing success of the Apprenticeship scheme, did the council really need to offer any further incentive?

Upon a vote being taken it was **Resolved** that:-

1) Apprentices are paid the Living Wage in their third year

(Voting - 4 For, 1 Against)

2) Officers look further into what support can be given to Apprentices in years one and two.

51 Pay Policy Statement 2014/15

The Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 is due to be considered by the HR Committee on 26 February 2015 for recommendation to Full Council on 17th March 2015. However, in view of the tight turnaround between these meetings it had been agreed at the agenda conference to circulate the statement for informal discussion at the January meeting.

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

- It was confirmed that a couple of officer amendments would be made to the final version to reflect the decision made by Council at the September meeting to introduce a Living Wage Supplement, which would ensure that all employees including casual workers receive no less than the Living Wage as their pensionable pay for all hours worked with effect from 1 October 2014.
- Chief Officers pay was not in the top quartile of Local Authorities. A market supplement for the Director of Finance had been agreed by HR Committee in order to attract the right calibre. A balance had to be struck between not overpaying but being able to recruit to the post without the need to use agencies (Interims). The Senior Leadership Development will improve the council's employment proposition for senior level recruitment.
- Work was underway to assess the viability of the Council seeking Living Wage employer accreditation. The financial and legal implications of making payment of the Living Wage a requirement on the Council's contractors must be quantified before Council can make such a decision. An update will be provided to Cabinet before the end of the municipal year.

52 AOB

None.

Date of Next Meeting - 26 February 2015 at 1.30 pm

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chair