



Agenda Item No. (

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

Thursday 24 September 2015 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Richard Eddy
Councillor Mike Langle
Councillor Mike Wollacott

Officers in attendance:

Richard Billingham - Service Director, Human Resources
Mark Williams - People Business Partner
James Brereton - HR Advisor
Louise deCordova - Democratic Services

21. Apologies, Substitutions and Introductions (agenda item no.1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Leaman and Councillor Rylatt

22. Declarations of Interest (agenda item no.2)

No declarations were received.

23. Urgent Business (agenda item no.3)

- (a) The Chair raised the issue of changes in the payroll administration of trade union subs and asked whether the rule changes might i) have an adverse cost to the Council or ii) affect the level of release time for trade union staff representatives.
- (b) The Service Director, Human Resources stated that no adverse cost was anticipated due to the automation of the payroll system, and that at the current time there was no intention to reduce either health and safety or employment trade union representation. This was seen as important in order not to hamper the organisations ability to facilitate good employee relations especially during times of workplace change. However any trade union staff representation must not equate to a full-time trade union position in order for the employee to retain essential workplace skills.

24. Minutes of the Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 25 June 2015. (agenda item no.4)

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

25. Action Sheet (agenda item no.5)

Resolved: that the Action Sheet be noted.

26. Public Forum (agenda item no.6)

The following Public Forum items were received:

Agenda Item	Author of Statement/Question	Subject of Statement	No
No.8	Unite – Steve Paines	HR Dashboard	1a
No.9	Unite – Steve Paines	Public Sector Exit Pay Cap	1b
No.8	GMB – Wendy Weston and Jeff Sutton	HR Dashboard	2a
No.9	GMB – Wendy Weston and Jeff Sutton	Public Sector Exit Pay Cap	2b

The Committee agreed that each statement would be considered in conjunction with the relevant items on the agenda.

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A copy of each statement

27. Work Programme 2015/16 (agenda item no.7)

James Brereton referred Members to the work programme and outlined the programme updates.

The following items are to be carried forward to a future meeting:

- Constitution change
- Workforce planning
- Pay & Reward Phase 2

In discussion the following was noted:

- (a) Concern over delay in the item regarding Pay. Officers confirmed that the team were still pulling together options for the future around pay structures. There was still work to do to understand the impact of the living wage cost pressure at the lower end of the pay scale and the subsequent impact of technical pay scales at the top. A workshop with external support was scheduled on 2 October to enable the options to be explored further.

- (b) Members questioned whether the Council should seek accredited Living Wage status. Officers advised that whilst the Council has implemented the Living Wage for its own staff. Discussions were ongoing with the Living Wage Foundation to understand the process for achieving the accreditation licence. In addition procurement colleagues were working to understand and assess the legal and financial implications and impact of accreditation, to the Council. Any roll out through the Council's procurement contracts would anticipate significant renegotiation. There may be different levels of accreditation that could be explored. Recognition that the Foundation may in time become redundant should the government living wage achieve parity with the minimum wage currently intended to be £9 by 2020.

Resolved – that the updates to the Work Programme for 2015/16 be noted.

28. Human Resources Dashboard (agenda item no.8)

Mark Williams introduced the report and updated the Committee on the key metrics as at 30 June 2015.

In discussion the following was noted:

- (a) Workforce Size and Cost. Question over reason that casuals and seasonal workers were not included in the data figures and definition of casual. Confirmed that this did not relate to zero hour contracts. Staff were not under obligation to accept the work when offered. Definition to be updated in footnotes and information to be emailed to Members.
ACTION
- (b) Officers to include agency and consultancy workforce spend in future reports, including benchmarking information against Core Cities. Potential to use cost per citizen as a metric. **ACTION**
- (c) Absence Management. Some double counting occurred where members of staff held two jobs, multiple absences were recorded. Email information on numbers of staff who have more than one job to Members for information. **ACTION**
- (d) Concern raised that timing of reports and Committees meant that information provided was retrospective. Officers to investigate re-timing the committees meetings to enable data to be considered sooner.
ACTION
- (e) Implementation of new integrated Human Resource and Payroll Software will enable a real-time human resources dashboard. Currently a time lag due to 2-stage process to analyse and present data in its current form. An intermediary measure will be to verbally update committee on any significant variances to the submitted reports. **ACTION**

- (f) Confirmation that 126 members of staff equated to 60% of absence. Identified that People and Place have higher instances of sickness absence attributed to the nature of their work. Targeted work is being carried out with managers and staff to address this. Questioned whether anxiety and stress were the underlying causes. There is a disparity in the information provided to managers and the information provided to the Employee Assistance Programme. Work is being carried out to unpick this with a focus on building skills for managers around mental health and wellbeing, removing stigma through holistic level support.
- (g) Human Resources information regularly and proactively discussed with department leaders and trade union representatives.
- (h) Employee Landscape. Make future reports a rolling '12 months to view' to enable identification of trends. **ACTION**
- (i) Email information on leavers for 'other reasons' to committee members for info. e.g. numbers may include staff who have moved roles within the organisation. **ACTION**
- (j) Add a column to 'leaver by salary' to show the percentage of the Council's workforce in post in each salary band.
- (k) Workforce Diversity. Check that 2011 Census data reflects rates of economic activity. **ACTION**
- (l) Include in future reports numbers of staff as well as percentages. **ACTION**

Resolved – that the report be noted and above actions taken in relation to future reports.

29. Public Sector Exit Payment Cap (agenda Item No. 9)

James Brereton introduced the report and circulated the Local Government Association Report on the subject, summarising the key points.

In discussion the following was noted:

- (a) Over the last 4-5 years, 19 cases where the exit package was in excess of £95k (circa 1-4 per year) 11 cases had been recorded in the last year due to the restructure.
- (b) Cllr Pearce was confirmed as the representative on the Local Government Pension Scheme. Chair to ask Cllr Pearce to update the Committee periodically on significant updates reference the Scheme. **ACTION**

Resolved – that the report be noted.

Date of Next Meeting – 17 December 2015 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 3pm.

Chair



GMB Submission

Bristol City Council

HR Committee 24/9/15

Agenda item 8 - H R Dashboard

Workforce size - It is concerning to note that the workforce is increasing following the restructuring in 2014 even though at the moment the spend is 'fairly' static. We would welcome further information on why there has been an increase, in what area's and at what grades.

Absence Management - sickness due to anxiety, stress, depression is currently running at 28% and is the most common reason for absence. We would welcome future data to identify how much is work related and how the authority hope to reduce the figure.

Employee Landscape - Leavers by reason - At the moment the information provided is of little use as further clarification is needed under headings of other reasons, resigned and unknown. It is hoped that exit interviews will be undertaken as a matter of course and that these will identify the issues that have caused staff to leave the authority.

We look forward to reviewing the next quarters data with the further clarification we recommend.

Agenda item 9 - Public Sector Exit Payment Cap

We are concerned to note that the Government's consultation also refers to its plan to consider further reforms to the calculation of compensation terms and to employer funded early retirement in circumstances of

redundancy. It states its intention to consult on possible measures in these areas in due course.

As the majority of our members would receive well below the £95k cap, future changes to the the calculation of compensation terms may have a major financial impact on them.

We wish however to see staff keeping their jobs and public money being directed into front line services.

Wendy Weston
Branch Secretary

Jeff Sutton
Branch President



Unite submission for HR Committee 24 September 2015

Agenda item 8 HR Dashboard

Page three of the dashboard highlights starters with the Council outnumber leavers by 54%. In the Employee Landscape section other reasons for leaving the employment make up the greatest number of exits so it would be useful to have further information on this category.

Some of the information could be more meaningful if the data could be displayed in relation to the size of the departmental head count. For example page 25 working days lost by reason, People have the highest number of days absence due to anxiety, stress and depression. The numbers need to be considered in relation to the total number of employees in that Department.

Place has some service areas that are above the Council target. This may be because there is a lot of long term absence in these areas. Overall sickness absence is nearly two days above the target of 8 days. Also stress, anxiety and depression are the reason for the greatest number of days lost.

Agenda item 9 Public Sector Exit Pay Cap

The Government's proposal to limit staff termination payments to £95,000 is age discriminatory. This is because older staff are more likely to have built up greater lengths of Local Government service which could impact final payments due to the proposed cap.

The payments staff receive are made in accordance with Council Policy and Procedure and should not be subject to external influence. If imposed the Council should refer to Full Council for exemption from the cap.

Steve Paines

Unite Convenor