

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

3 August 2016 at 2.00 pm



### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Helen Godwin (Chair), Paula O'Rourke (Vice-Chair), Kye Dudd, Gary Hopkins (part), Mike Langley, Jo Sergeant and Mark Weston (substitute)

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Richard Billingham (Service Director HR), Mark Williams, James Brereton and Louise deCordova

## **1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**

The Democratic Services Officer welcomed attendees and introductions were made.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Eddy, (Cllr Weston in substitute) and Cllr Hopkins (part).

## **3. Annual Business**

The Democratic Services Officer conducted the Annual Business as follows:

### **a. Election of Chair 2016/17**

Cllr Godwin was duly elected as Chair of the Committee for 2016/17

### **b. Election of Vice Chair 2016/17**

Cllr O'Rourke was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2016/17

### **c. Membership of the Committee**

The Committee noted the details of the current membership for 2016/17.

### **d. Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the terms of reference for the Committee agreed by Annual Council at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016.



**e. Date and Times of meetings 2016/17**

The Committee noted the dates and times proposed as:

Wed, 3 August 2016, 2.00pm

Thu, 22 September 2016, 2.00pm

Thu, 15 December 2016, 2.00pm

Thu, 16 February 2016, 2.00pm

Thu, 20 April 2016, 2.00pm

**4. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5. Urgent Business**

The Chair referenced an urgent information item regarding organisational re-structuring to be deferred until the Exempt Session after Item 11.

**6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

**7. Public Forum**

The Committee noted the following statement (a copy of the statement has been placed in the minute book (accessed via Democratic Services)).

- Councillor Asher Craig - Item 9: Work Programme 2016/17

The Chair advised that the submission would be taken just before the item concerned.

**8. The role of the Human Resources Committee**

The Committee considered a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, which explained the role of the Human Resources Committee.

In discussion, Members sought clarification over current practice in employee relations and consultation and whether there were any formal links to the HR Committee.



Officers advised that there were a number of Staff-Led Groups (SLGs) and a good working relationship developed with Unions but no formal link to the HR Committee. It was confirmed that any formal dispute could be raised to HR Committee as part of the Council's Disputes Procedure.

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.**

## 9. Work Programme

The Committee received a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, and considered the public forum statement by Cllr Craig in conjunction with this item. The report set out some areas of HR policy and practice that the HR Committee could explore as part of its work programme for 2016-17.

In discussion the following points were made:

### *Culture change, improving diversity and tackling inequality*

- a. Cllr Craig summarised the key points of the public statement and introduced Professor Bamford. The Committee was asked to include culture change, improving diversity and tackling inequality in the work programme and consider a review of its Terms of Reference (ToR) to ensure that these were explicit in the committees ToR. **Action: Culture Working Group**
- b. There was a case for working in partnership with other public sector employers who were facing the same challenges within the constraints of budget cuts.
- c. There was an opportunity through the Apprenticeship Levy from April 2017 – to consider how this could be used to further the committee's aims. **Action: James Brereton**
- d. There was suggestion that recruitment of staff from outside the organisation could have a demoralising effect on staff. There was a strong argument for developing staff within the organisation. Developing vehicles to progress people with protected characteristics to address under-representation at higher grades. It was recognised that meritocracy was important, and that external candidates could sometimes offer a fresh perspective, especially with regard to the aspiration for culture change.

### *HR Dashboard*

- e. Members sought clarification and analysis on leavers data and why representation amongst equalities groups had fallen. **Action: Culture Working Group**
- f. The Committee noted that the data identified 30% of the work force as over 55 whereas the population of Bristol had an increasingly diverse young population. Research had shown that millennials sought a different work proposition than their older counterparts. Were there opportunities to bring younger people into the workforce? Or an opportunity to emulate the work Birmingham had done on a City System level, working in partnership with other public sector organisations to develop the concept of a Birmingham Public Servant. **Action: Culture Working Group**



### *Staff Survey*

- g. It was confirmed that UNITE would be keen to progress the Staff Survey which had commenced under the previous administration. Timing would be critical as well as sensitivity around job losses to maximise staff engagement. Closing date of the Stonewall survey is 4 November. Liz McDougall had led on a staff health survey and emphasised the need for focused questions, which led to clear outcomes that could be acted upon and fed back to participants.
- h. The committee noted that the 2011 staff survey had a 43% response rate. The Committee wanted to ensure that the views of the staff that did not engage were still captured. It was agreed that a joint survey with trade unions and Bristol City Council would be welcome. A sub group to be set up to progress and develop with the trade unions. Cllr Craig proposed that Professor Bamford who had offered pro bono support to help progress the staff survey work be included on the sub group. A draft copy of the survey to be presented at the next meeting in September and link to a theme, *'How the Council should look in 2020'*. **Action: Culture Working Group**

### *Living Wage*

- i. There were two facets to the living wage accreditation. 1. As an organisation paying its own employees. 2. Building the living wage into third party contracts. At present the Council could only encourage but not stipulate the contractual obligation to pay the living wage. There may be an opportunity to progress this more robustly through the Social Value Act. Confirmed that the living wage had effectively replaced the lowest five grades in the Council's pay spine. Professor Bamford suggested that the Council look closely at what John Lewis Partnership had achieved in this area. **Action: James Brereton**

### *Use of Agency Staff*

- j. Concern was raised over the use of agency staff in the Council. Officers to provide a report on the wider context for use of Agency staff in the organisation. **Action: James Brereton**
- k. The committee requested an update on the Collective agreement over holiday pay. **Action: James Brereton**

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the report and actions arising.**

Cllr Hopkins joined the meeting.

### **10 Protected Officer disciplinary investigation process**

The Committee considered a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, which updated the national guidance (from the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities).



In discussion, it was agreed that without Member involvement, there could be serious delays and reputational implications if these circumstances arose. A final proposal to be brought to the next meeting. **Action: James Brereton**

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the report and actions arising and re-affirmed the decision made at its previous meeting to include elected members sitting on the proposed Statutory Officer Panel.**

## **11 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**The Committee RESOLVED: that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following items, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.**

## **12 Interim senior management arrangements**

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

The Committee considered an exempt report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace. The report updated the Committee on the departure of the City Director, interim arrangements that have been made to cover the vacancy, and the proposed process for the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

**The Committee RESOLVED to note the report and actions arising.**

## **13 Urgent Business (deferred from Item 5)**

(Exempt under paragraph 4: Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour matters relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority)

The Chair explained that this exempt item had been taken as urgent business in order to apprise the Committee of an imminent announcement regarding organisational re-structuring that would be published before the next meeting in September.

Meeting ended at 4.25 pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_



