

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

22 July 2021 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Tim Wye, Paula O'Rourke, Steve Pearce, Sarah Classick, Richard Eddy, Lesley Alexander, Farah Hussain and Kerry Bailes

Officers in Attendance:-

Mark Williams (Head of Human Resources), Steph Griffin (Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development) and Mark Jefferson (Workforce Analytics Manager)

1 Confirmation of Chair for 2021/22

The Committee noted that at its meeting on 25 May 2021, Full Annual Council appointed Councillor Tim Wye as Chair of the Human Resources Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

2 Confirmation of Vice Chair for 2021/22

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Steve Pearce as Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

3 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting and introductions were made.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Councillor Lorraine Francis.

5 Membership of the Human Resources Committee 2021/22

The Membership of the Human Resources Committee for 2021/22, as set out below, was noted.

Councillors Lesley Alexander, Kerry Bailes, Sarah Classick, Richard Eddy, Lorraine Francis, Farah Hussain,



Steve Pearce, Paula O'Rourke, Tim Wye.

6 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference as approved at Full Council on 25 May 2021 were noted.

7 Dates and times of meetings for 2021/22

The Committee agreed that all future meetings for 2021/22 would be held on the following dates:

23 September 2021
16 December 2021
17 February 2022
28 April 2022

The time of the meetings to be confirmed pending consultation with members.

8 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pearce declared that he was a Board Member of the Avon Pension Fund.

9 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

10 Public Forum

The Committee received two questions and answers as set out below.

Name	Subject
Suzanne Audrey	Appointment and/or procurement of staff

Question 1

Please can you confirm whether the author of the 9 March 2021 report to Cabinet has now been appointed, on a permanent or interim basis or as a consultant, to any of the posts funded by the 'Change Request' within that report?

Colin Molton is employed by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) as an Interim Project Director. Any questions regarding his employment should be raised with WECA.

Question 2



Are members of the Human Resources committee satisfied that the appointment and/or procurement of staff and consultants to the Temple Quarter Joint Delivery Team has followed, and will follow, open and fair processes?

The appointment and / or procurement of staff as consultants to the Temple Quarter Joint Delivery Team is exclusively a matter for WECA as they are the employer so the Human Resources Committee is not in a position to comment or consider the matter.

Members noted the information contained in the question and answer.

Replying to a member's question the Head of Human Resources (HR) clarified that the employee (CM) had ceased employment with the Council in January 2021 and, as far as aware, was no longer in receipt of any income from the Council.

11 Work Programme

The Committee received and noted the Work Programme for 2021/22.

Arising from discussion members requested the following additions –

- Report on the level of capacity within the Council's workforce including information on vacancies, recruitment & retention issues, spend on interim and fixed term contracts.
- How flexible working and redeployment during the pandemic might inform future ways of working.
- Have an oversight of the Apprenticeship scheme, possible report in September or December.
- Report/updates on any of the Council's major policy changes.

12 Workforce Strategy - Overview

The Committee received a detailed presentation by the Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development in respect of the Council's Workforce Strategy.

Members were informed of the main objectives of the Strategy which were -

1. To set a clear direction and priorities for the work of the Council and to ensure that the workforce was clear about the objectives and their role in achieving them.
2. To advance equality and inclusion practice and continue to tackle institutional racism.
3. Help build and embed confidence, skills, and talent in the workforce.



4. Have honest and open dialogue about the challenges faced by the Council, whilst recognising and celebrating success.
5. To work according to the Council's values which underpin how we work with each other.

Complementing the core programme of Human Resources and learning and development support, a series of key initiatives had been identified and set against six employee-focused themes and which formed the basis of the plan, these were -

1. An empowering organisation - Creating a shared purpose and a positive environment where people were confident and enabled to do their best every day.
2. Equality and inclusion - Building an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the city that we serve and the needs of all citizens, and where colleagues felt confident about being themselves at work.
3. Performance and talent development - Developing careers and managing performance in a meaningful way.
4. Workforce health and wellbeing - Keeping the workplace safe and healthy, and the workforce engaged and resilient
5. Structure pay and policy - A clear framework to help redesign the council and support good employee relations.
6. Branding and recruitment - Becoming an employer of choice; attracting, developing, and retaining the best talent.

Key points highlighted during discussion were –

1. The report was welcomed and the work that had gone into producing it was recognised.
2. The strategy needed to focus more on recruiting future employees from deprived areas of the city.
3. More emphasis needed on the problems sometimes faced by teams in achieving work objectives/targets and the associated management component as part of the process.
4. Empowering of the workforce to achieve objectives/targets should be given greater priority.
5. Management of teams was more than a once-a-year review, more an ongoing part of the daily routine.
6. The work of teams was sometimes down to actual capacity to do their work and the tools to do the job.

Resolved – That the aims and objectives of the Workforce Strategy be endorsed and noted.



13 Annual Report Pay Gap report

The Committee received a report of the Head of Human Resources providing information on gender, race, disability and LGB pay gaps for the City Council at the report date of 31 March 2021 and the work the Council was doing to address the pay gaps.

Members noted in particular –

1. The mean gender pay gap was 4.26% and had increased from 4.08%. However, the median gender pay gap had fallen by 0.4%.
2. The City Council was one of a small number of employers in the UK to publish the race pay gap. Few employers had been identified who published disability and LGB pay gaps.
3. Other than gender, the pay gap reporting was reliant on employee disclosure. 93% of the workforce had disclosed their ethnicity and 88% of the workforce had disclosed whether they had a disability or not. 73% had disclosed their sexual orientation.
4. The mean race pay gap was 9.78%. The pay gap was closing and had reduced from 15.06% in 2016.
5. The mean disability pay gap was 1.37% and had fallen from 1.97%.
6. The median pay has increased due to an increase in the number of disabled employees in the second pay quartile.
7. The LGB pay gap was reported for the first time and the mean pay gap was 2.04% and the median pay gap was 3.06%.
8. Clear plans and targets were in place to reduce the pay gaps in future years.

Members discussed the report and key points highlighted were –

1. A higher pay gap in some directorates would be redressed by several factors including learning & development schemes and succession planning with a positive emphasis on internal recruitment and would need to show an improvement in the pay gap figures. It was recognised that this could be impeded by low turnover of the workforce.
2. Recognised more focus was needed to improve the pay gap in certain key areas e.g. trans people and Somali work force.
3. All Council roles undergo a job evaluation process to determine the pay grade for everyone doing that work. The Council's 'real living wage' was paid for all its lowest paid employees which was above the UK statutory national and minimum wage set by central government.

Resolved – That the report and the work that was being undertaken to close the pay gaps in the Council be noted.



14 Selection Committee - Size & Composition

The Committee received a report from the Head of Human Resources seeking to recommend to Full Council that the Selection Committee was reduced in size from 9 to 6 members.

1. As currently constituted, the Selection Committee had 9 members and it was considered that this was too large a committee to undertake the effective recruitment and selection of senior leaders.
2. A reduction to 6 members would mean that the committee remained politically balanced.

Resolved – That the Human Resources Committee recommend to Full Council that the Selection Committee be reduced in size from 9 to 6 members.

15 COVID-19 - workforce update and return to workplaces

Members received a report from the Head of Human Resources providing an update on the recovery plans for workplaces going forward including future of workspaces principles.

Members noted in particular –

1. The Council was taking a risk-based approach to opening workplaces which took full account of the current rate of COVID-19 case rates in the city; the advice of the city's Director of Public Health and the obligations to all employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act.
2. The Council was taking account of the latest Government advice which stated that employers could start to plan for a return to workplaces.
3. The Council had introduced changes to the way office spaces were managed at the council's main offices at City Hall and Temple Street, through the introduction of zoned and socially distanced work desks for services on a trial basis. The zoning arrangements were based on the reduced requirement for desks as many staff located in these services had been continuing to work from home effectively.
4. The risk of exposure to COVID-19 remained high in workplaces and the Council would continue to manage the risks in accordance with the COVID secure workplace guidance even though this would no longer be a legal requirement from the 19th July 2021.

Members discussed the report and key points highlighted were –



1. Feedback from staff was that many preferred to continue to work from home or a blend of workplace and home working. Where there was a demand to work in the office the Council ensured both access and full support.
2. There was an ongoing dialogue about a flexible approach combining working in the office and working from home as appropriate. Key to this was support from line managers and members noted that work on this was ongoing.
3. Important for the workforce to be allowed to find a balance of working that best suited their needs incorporating increased use of digital facilities and hybrid working where required and use of other council buildings and external locations.
4. Important for newly recruited employees to have an opportunity to join colleagues in the workplace to help them learn the role and ways of working, noted that this would be included as part of the employee induction process.

Meeting ended at 12.05 pm

CHAIR _____

