

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017 at 10am



### Members Present:-

**Councillors:** Kye Dudd (Chair), Richard Eddy, Gary Hopkins, Mike Langley, Jo Sergeant and Jon Wellington

### Officers in Attendance:-

Jacque McGeachie (Interim Service Director, HR and Workforce), Mark Williams (HR Business Partner), James Brereton (HR Consultant), Lucy Fleming (Democratic and Scrutiny Manager)

## 1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

Cllr Dudd welcomed those present and introductions were made.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr O'Rourke.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sergeant declared that her partner worked for Avon Pension Fund (see agenda item 12 - Work Programme).

## 4. Annual Business

The Committee considered the Annual Business report. Details of the decisions made can be found below.

### The Committee resolved the following;

- A. Election of Chair - That Councillor Kye Dudd be elected as Chair of the Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year. *Moved by Councillor Eddy and seconded by Councillor Wellington.*



- B. Election of Vice Chair 2017/18 – That Councillor Paula O’Rourke be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year. Moved by Councillor Eddy and seconded by Councillor Langley.**
- C. Membership of the Committee – That the Membership as set out on this agenda be noted.**
- D. Terms of Reference – That the attached terms of reference agreed at Full Council on 23rd May 2017 be noted.**
- E. Dates and Times of Meetings – That the schedule of meetings for 17/18 be agreed as follows;**

**Thursday, 3 August 2017, 10am (AGM)**

**Thursday, 19 October 2017, 10am**

**Thursday, 25 January 2018, 10am**

**Thursday, 26 April 2018, 10am**

## **5. Chairs’ Business**

The Committee queried the arrangements in relation to the recent appointment of the Head of the Chief Executive’s Office and were advised that the usual robust recruitment process had been followed. Members requested that the job description and employee specification be circulated for information purposes.

## **6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed as a correct record;

Human Resources Committee – 2 February 2017

Extraordinary Meeting - Human Resources Committee - 6 March 2017

**The Committee Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 17 and 6<sup>th</sup> March 17 be approved.**

## **7. Public Forum**

Two items of public forum business were received and a copy placed in the minute book (please also see next agenda item).



## 8. Standing Item – Industrial Relations Issues

Members noted that Unison has raised concerns about car parking issues experienced by staff employed as carers. Officers acknowledged the issues and confirmed they would report back with details of a solution in due course.

## 9. Apprenticeships and the Levy

The Committee received a presentation from Jane Taylor, Service Manager, Employment and Skills and Darren Perkins, Apprenticeships Manager, a copy of which is appended to these minutes at Appendix A.

Members considered the information provided and asked for additional details in a number of areas. The key points made were as follows;

- From 2018 responsibility for skills would transfer to the Metro Mayor which could present additional opportunities for collaborative working across the region. Bristol was in a strong position to play a pivotal role in promoting learning in the wider area.
- The City Council could retain funds raised by the apprenticeships levy for up to two years before they got passed to central government. Officers were very confident that all the levy funding would be used effectively in the city and would not be handed back.
- Plans were in place to roll out provision of learning opportunities to other Bristol City Council suppliers, as well as ALMOs such as Bristol Energy and Bristol Waste. From 2018 10% of the apprenticeships levy should be used for external partners so this provided a good opportunity to develop additional capacity across the city.
- As part of Bristol City Council's Social Value policy consideration was given to learning opportunities when selecting new suppliers. For large infrastructure projects, e.g. The Arena, bidders needed to demonstrate how they would provide training and development opportunities as part of their offer.
- Work was underway to improve equality of opportunity across apprenticeships, particularly regarding gender balance. For example, in some areas automatic interviews were given to underrepresented groups.
- Apprenticeships were not permanent job opportunities which was a risk for the Council since it could be developing new talent that was then lost to other employers. The situation was difficult to manage at a time when the Council was a shrinking organisation but it was important to consider the wider benefits to the city.
- The majority of apprentices were school leavers, however, there was no age limit and currently one person enrolled on the scheme was in their mid-forties.

**The Committee Resolved: That the updated be noted.**



## 10. Use of Agency Staff

After a brief introduction to the report from officers, Members asked for additional details in a number of areas. The key points made were as follows;

- Guidant was the organisation used to provide the City Council with temporary employees following a procurement process in 2015/16.
- Recruitment was underway to reduce reliance on interim and temporary staff. There were currently around 50 posts a month being advertised.
- In some instances, temporary staff were essential to fill posts where recruitment was difficult e.g. in some engineering roles. In other sectors, such as IT, staff often preferred to work on a contractual basis.

**The Committee Resolved: That the updated be noted.**

## 11. Redundancies 2017-18

The update report was noted. Members requested the following additional information;

- Details from the Chair of the Audit Committee regarding concerns they had raised at a previous meeting regarding the volume of redundancies within Bristol City Council.
- Clarification regarding the breakdown of the headcount reduction of 379 quoted in the report i.e. the proportion that had left through voluntary severance versus natural wastage.
- Benchmarking data to show the staff turnover rates/head count reductions at Bristol City Council compared to other similar public sector organisations.

**The Committee Resolved: That the updated be noted and additional details be provided as requested.**

## 12. Work Programme

The following was discussed;

- It was agreed that updates regarding the performance of the Avon Pension Fund and proposed changes to the Council's Constitution be provided for consideration at the next meeting.
- Members were concerned that staff sometimes seemed reluctant to take decisions, which could be a training issue. It was agreed that staff training and development be considered by the Committee at a future meeting and that a standing item be added to future agendas re training and development issues.
- That information regarding the City Council's pay policy be added to the work programme for discussion at the October meeting, but that an informal briefing session could be arranged before then if appropriate.



**The Committee Resolved: That the Work Programme be amended as detailed above.**

Meeting ended at 11.30am

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

