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Bristol City Council Minutes of the Human Resources Committee Annual General meeting

5 July 2018 at 10 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Jon Wellington (Chair), Paula O'Rourke (Vice-Chair), Harriet Bradley, Lesley Alexander (subst for Richard Eddy), Gary Hopkins, Ruth Pickersgill, Jo Sergeant

Officers in Attendance:-

Mark Williams (Head of HR), John Walsh (Interim Director: HR, Workforce & Organisational Development), Mark Jefferson (Analytics Adviser), Husinara Jones (Lawyer), Steve Gregory (Democratic Services)

1. Election of Chair for 2018/19

Councillor Jon Wellington was elected Chair for 2018/19.

2. Election of Vice Chair for 2018/19

Councillor Paula O'Rourke was elected Vice-Chair for 2018/19.

3. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

4. Membership of Human Resources Committee

Membership of the Human Resources Committee for 2018/19 was noted.

5. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were noted subject to a minor amendment to remove a reference to Employment and Remuneration Committee.

6. Dates and times of meetings for 2018/19

Agreed that all meetings to commence at 10 am on the following dates -

(TBC) September 2018;
8 November 2018;
17 January 2019;

7 March 2019;
9 May 2019.

8. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Eddy, Councillor Lesley Alexander substituted.

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 April 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. Public Forum

One public forum statement from GMB in respect of agenda item 11 (Tables 3 and 8) was received and noted.

Members commented on –

Consultancy costs (Table 3) and Table 8 - other reasons for leaving

1. Pay ratio of 10 to 1 were not always adhered to as consultants were paid varying rates;
2. IR35 had pushed up costs of daily interims;
3. Rules should be applied to limit the duration of interims contract period;
4. 'Other' category should include details, via an exit survey, such as gender, ethnicity, disability;
5. Recruitment of consultants process needed more clarification;
6. Costs of consultants should include expenses such as accommodation and travel.

The Head of HR said the HR team would look at the control mechanisms for interim managers including governance arrangements, it was emphasised that most jobs were hard to recruit to hence the need for these arrangements.

12. HR Dashboard

The HR Analytics Adviser detailed the Dashboard information highlighting particular points of interest to members. Having regard to the point raised in the public forum about consultancy costs members were advised that these were not shown as they were not employees and separate to this information. Consultancy costs had risen due to the high number of vacancies during Q1 and Q2.

Members commented and officers replied –

1. Return to work interviews (RTW) after sickness absence were low at 27%. Head of HR said RTW were not mandatory but notwithstanding this anecdotal evidence suggested that RTWI were taking place at an informal level and sometimes might only be a short conversation. It was acknowledged that this needed to improve and that the new HR system would be in operation from April 2019 which would include a mandatory requirement to record that RTWI's had taken place.
2. More information on interims required eg, daily pay rates, duration of contract. Head of HR confirmed

that improvements were already being made, also emphasised that interim staff were a disparate group so that even though the information was available there were issues with collating and presenting the details in a clear way;

3. More information needed in respect of resignations such as level in organisation, gender, ethnicity, disability so that trends could be seen more clearly. Head of HR agreed to provide;
4. Duration of Performance Management cases lengthy. Head of HR explained that action was being taken to address this. Number of issues affected this eg, approach to recording cases, how recorded, logging finished cases. Systems were improving on this. Noted that some cases could be delayed by the employee.

13. Work Programme

The Committee noted the Work Programme. Head of HR referred to Equalities report item for September meeting and asked for members input on this and any other issues. Ideas included –

1. Staff development;
2. Gender pay gap;
3. Policies to help female and BME staff;
4. Reward and recognition schemes not just pay;
5. Pay and grading;
6. Recruitment and selection of consultants and interim staff (a separate report on this would be brought to the November meeting);
7. Cost of the Council's major restructure (to be part of report to November meeting);
8. Workforce survey regarding change of culture (to be included in Workforce Plan report);
9. Consult staff about council service provision (to be included in Workforce Plan report);
10. Full breakdown of staff leaving the Council;
11. Update regarding criminal records policy and how it has changed (report to January as at one year operation by then).

Subject to comments above the Work Programme was noted.

14. Standing item – Industrial Relations (verbal update)

Head of HR reported that following an employee consultation and a trade union ballot about a reduction in voluntary severance payments and grade protection following restructuring/redeployment the answer from staff was an overwhelming rejection of the proposals. This meant that the Council would not proceed with this proposal at the current time and the proposal would be put on hold pending further consideration and consultation. The required financial savings associated with the proposal would now have to be found elsewhere.

15. Amendments to the Code of Conduct for Employees

The Committee was advised that a range of separate matters were considered to be inadequately covered in the Code of Conduct for Employees. New or amended items had now been drafted for inclusion to address the shortfall in coverage. Further work was ongoing in relation to employee lobbying and disclosure of criminal matters. None of the amendments to date had been disputed by staff or trade unions following a consultation period.

Arising from discussion and questions the following points were clarified –

1. There were clear procedures and processes in place for employees to raise legitimate and relevant concerns about the Council and the services it provides, these were set out in the current Code of Conduct for member/officer relations (point 6.4) which formed part of the Council's constitution;
2. The revised Code of Conduct had improved procedures in respect of disclosure of criminal matters;
3. Quality of relationships and communication between councillors and officers was important and responses to councillors, requests for information in particular, were underpinned by a 'need to know' principle, the parameters relating to this would be circulated to staff and trade unions to further clarify this issue;
4. It was requested that the Equalities section of the Code be updated to reflect the Public Sector Equality Duty and that reference to performance management and safeguarding should also be added to the code of conduct. The Head of HR agreed to make these amendments and additions.

Resolved – that the proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct for Employees be approved.

16. Performance Management of JNC Officers (member discussion)

The Committee was advised that a report on this matter had been requested by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB). Given the importance of performance management it was considered that the content of the report should include a benchmarking protocol about what was done and how well it was done or not so that any issues could be taken forward and improved.

The Head of HR advised the Committee that performance management of JNC officers was a Human Resource remit and a report would be submitted to the HR Committee at its September meeting showing the broader aspect of performance management regarding JNC officers and would include direct input from the newly appointed Executive Director of Resources and Head of Paid Services.

To address the issues raised by members and the concerns raised by the OSMB the Head of HR suggested that an informal Task and Finish Working Group be set up comprising members, officers and trade union representatives which could look at parameters such as benchmarking and officer remit.

In addition a member suggested that the Executive Director of Resources and Head of Paid Services be invited to the September meeting of the HR Committee to present his views on how performance management would be managed in the future including a benchmarking process. The Committee were in favour of this option.

The Head of HR agreed to invite the Executive Director of Resources and Head of Paid Services to the September meeting in association with the report to the HR Committee regarding benchmarking of performance management. The report would also include proposals for an informal Task and Finish Working Group as discussed.

Resolved –

- 1. That the Executive Director of Resources and Head of Paid Services be invited to the September meeting of the HR Committee in respect of JNC officer performance management issues;**
- 2. That a report be submitted to the September meeting of the HR Committee to consider benchmarking proposals and the establishment of an informal Task and Finish working group regarding JNC officer performance management issues.**

17. HR & Payroll System - verbal update regarding procurement

The Head of HR reported that the procurement process for a new supplier to operate the HR & Payroll System had now been completed and would be implemented on the 1 April, 2019.

The Committee noted the information.

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved – that under Section 100 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

20. JNC Chief Officer Pay Arrangements

Resolved –

- 1. That the JNC pay award for Chief Executives and the likely JNC pay award for Chief Officers be noted;**
- 2. That the current pay of individual Executive Directors and Directors be noted;**
- 3. That no adjustments would be made to the individual pay or pay ranges for Executive Directors or Directors as a consequence of JNC pay awards for 2018/2019.**

21. Pay of Executive Director: Adults, Children & Education

The Committee considered a report proposing the payment of an increase in salary, to the maximum of the salary scale, to the Executive Director: Adults, Children & Education.

The Committee gave full consideration to the factors leading to the proposed increase in salary.

On the recommendation, to approve the increase, being put to the vote there was one in favour and six against.

It was then moved and seconded that the increase in salary be not approved. On being put to the vote there were six for and one against.

Resolved – That the proposed payment of an increase in salary, to the maximum of the salary scales, to the Executive Director: Adults, Children & Education, be not approved.

Meeting ended at 12.15

CHAIR _____