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Bristol City Council Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

8 November 2018 at 10 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Jon Wellington (Chair), Harriet Bradley, Richard Eddy, Gary Hopkins, Paula O'Rourke, Ruth Pickersgill, Jo Sergeant

Officers in Attendance:-

Mark Williams (Head of Human Resources), John Walsh (Director: Workforce & Change), Mark Jefferson (Analytics Adviser), Steve Gregory (Democratic Services), Darren Perkins Project Manager, Steph Griffiths Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development, Emma Harding Senior Internal Communications Officer

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved –

- 1. That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 September 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair;**
- 2. That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 October 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

5. Public Forum

A statement was received from GMB in respect of the Living Wage Foundation, Senior Leadership Restructure and Employment Engagement Survey. Comment was also made about maintaining the collaborative work with the Council in respect of Pay Grade differentials. The statement was noted.

6. Apprenticeships & Apprenticeship Levy

The Committee received a report about an Apprenticeship Levy sharing proposal. Members were informed that the Council's apprenticeship recruitment was accelerating as planned however levy spending was currently significantly below target. As part of a remedial action plan it was now proposed to share up to 25% of the Levy fund with Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) partner employers through a new Levy Sharing scheme.

This would enable the Council to utilise 100% of its levy and contribute to inclusive growth in priority sectors and support more diverse recruitment. To maximise Levy sharing benefits it was proposed to establish a sharing scheme in line with the Council's procurement best practice by end December 2018.

Comments made highlighting key areas of concern/interest –

1. Important that the Council was fully inclusive with regard to equality issues and opportunities for vulnerable groups, this would cover areas such as gender, disabled people and other minority groups. Statistics on where the Council was on this would be shared with committee members outside of this meeting;
2. It was emphasised that there was a strong steer to encourage people from all areas of the workforce eg adult social care workers, employees from other smaller organisations and employees in the construction industry;
3. A joint meeting was being held with NHS Trusts in Bristol to widen the scope and the inclusivity of the project;
4. There would be a proactive approach to encourage diversity eg BAME and female employees;
5. Levy spend was primarily related to training with SME's contributing to wages;
6. Important to include community groups, to that end BCC would be holding tripartite meetings with Skills Agency and employers/community groups to further that goal;

The Project Manager asked that members pass on any further comments or ideas they might have to him to include in the project. Further update reports would be presented to the Committee and to seek further input from members. Members agreed to include in the Committee's Work Programme for May or June 2019.

Resolved – that the Apprenticeship Levy Sharing proposal as outlined in the report be endorsed, subject to an update report in May or June, 2019.

7. Work Programme.

Members suggested two additional items, Organisational Design Savings and Recruitment Policy update. Agreed that with regard to the latter there would be an informal debate prior to a formal report and members were invited to put forward their ideas and views to enable a wide ranging discussion. It was noted that information about this was available to members on The Source.

The Work Programme was noted.

8. Living Wage Foundation Accreditation

The Committee was informed that the Council had been accredited as a Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Foundation. By achieving this, the Council had demonstrated its commitment to ensure that the benefits of receiving at least the real Living Wage were felt not only by its own staff but also by the staff of its contractors eg procurement.

9. Organisational Improvement Plan

The Committee received a presentation on the Council's draft Organisational Improvement Plan which sought to make the Council become an employer which people were proud to work for and which delivered Corporate Strategy Priorities to the highest standard.

The Plan was themed into six distinct areas namely –

Workforce Theme 1: An Empowering Organisation;

Workforce Theme 2: Diversity and Inclusion;

Workforce Theme 3: Performance and Talent Management;

Workforce Theme 4: Workforce Health and Wellbeing;

Workforce Theme 5: Structure, Pay and Policy;

Workforce Theme 6: Our Brand and Recruitment.

It was envisaged that these goals would be achieved by -

1. Setting a clear direction and priorities;
2. Empowering and equipping employees with skills and confidence to deliver at their best;
3. Creating an inclusive, high-performing, healthy and motivated workplace;
4. Becoming an employer of choice.

Members of the Committee welcomed the Plan and arising from questions asked the following key points were made/confirmed –

1. Leadership courses would be organised by the Organisational Design Team in partnership with an external supplier and would be routed in the core business rather than a 'classroom' environment to ensure that theory would quickly translate into practice;
2. Measurement of the success of the Plan would be on annual basis following feedback from employees with a report being presented to both the Human Resources Committee and Cabinet detailing progress and achievements;
3. Resource would be made available to enable recruitment managers to challenge the recruitment process and identify shortcomings to enable a bespoke approach rather than 'one size fits all';
4. External expertise would be utilised to monitor access to training and its influence on changing the culture of the organisation;

5. Appraisal process for employees would be simplified with greater emphasis on team working;
6. More work would be done regarding support mechanisms for employees and team leaders particularly with regard to mental health issues and disabled employees.

Resolved – that draft Organisational Improvement Plan be noted and an updated plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

10. Organisational Redesign Savings

The Committee received a presentation in respect of an Organisational Redesign Plan to deliver savings based on an organisational redesign including the council's senior management structures. It was noted that last year there were thirteen interim director posts, this was now down to one.

The Committee welcomed the savings that had been achieved however some members expressed concern that there had not been any consultation with council members about the loss of jobs and the realignment of core functions brought about by the structural changes.

Resolved – that the Organisational Redesign Plan and the savings delivered to date be noted.

11. Employment Engagement Survey

The Committee received a presentation about the Council's proposed Employment Engagement Survey. The Survey would draw on the Survey last carried out in 2016 as a base reference. The new survey would track progress against certain markers: -

- Progress on previous survey results;
- Key engagement topics e.g. recognition, wellbeing;
- Actions from the annual business plan, organisational improvement plan, plus the equalities and inclusion strategy;

The target response rate would be at least 50% and the Survey would take place over a period of three weeks period in March, 2019.

With regard to comments made by GMB during public forum the Committee was informed that this issue was on the agenda for the CJCC today, that trade union representatives were being engaged and that staff would be given an opportunity to comment on the Survey.

Arising from questions from members the following key points were made/confirmed –

1. Copies of the Survey questions would be made available to members for comments;
2. Agreed to include a question about how employees felt about covering for periods of absence from colleagues;
3. Measures to ensure confidentiality and information safety would be robust;
4. Employees would be given time to complete the Survey in the workplace and during work time;
5. Exit surveys would be 'beefed up' for the future;

6. Employees with learning difficulties would be given appropriate assistance to complete the Survey;
7. Actions arising from the Survey would be conveyed to employees and would include a 'you said' / 'we did' style of feedback.

11. 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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Pay of Director – Adult Social Care

The Committee was advised that at its meeting of 6th November 2018 the Selection Committee unanimously resolved to recommend to the HR Committee that the appointment to the role of Director: Adults Social Care, on a two-year fixed term contract, be made at the maximum range for the Director Level 2 role (annual salary of £120,000). The Committee noted that the appointment represented a significant annual saving against the day rate contract currently in place for this role.

Meeting ended at 12.00

CHAIR _____