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Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

16 January 2020 at 10 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Harriet Bradley, Richard Eddy, Gary Hopkins, Ruth Pickersgill, Paula O'Rourke and Jon Wellington

Officers in Attendance:-

John Walsh (Director: Workforce & Change), Mark Williams (Head of Human Resources), Mark Jefferson (Analytics Adviser), Steve Gregory (Democratic Services)

Also in attendance: Sharon Garrod and Selena Ayling - Guidant

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Jeff Lovell (Chair). In the absence of the Chair the Vice Chair, Councillor Paula O'Rourke, chaired the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 December 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matter arising – arising from the circulation of the Dashboard, an issue was raised about staff absences and whether the Council used and implemented the Bradford Factor, a formula used in human resource management as a means of measuring worker absenteeism. After some discussion it was agreed to include this item on the Work Programme for the Human Resources Committee's April meeting for further consideration.

5. Public Forum

Name	Subject
GMB Avon & Wessex Branch -Wendy Weston Branch Secretary and Jeff Sutton Branch President	Agenda item 8 – Contingent Workforce Report Update

The Committee noted the statement. The Head of Human Resources said that the issues raised within the Statement would be clarified when Members considered agenda item 8, Contingent Workforce.

6. Work Programme

The updated Work Programme for 2019/20, as amended by the Head of Human Resources, was noted. Due to the high number of items going to the March Human Resources Committee meeting the Head of Human Resources agreed to look at a possible reallocation of the work programme.

7. Pay Policy Statement

The Committee received a report detailing the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, which made it a legal requirement for all local authorities to agree and publish a pay policy statement, annually, before the start of the financial year to which the statement relates.

Key points highlighted were -

1. The pay ranges for Executive Directors and Directors were proposed to remain at the 2019/20 levels;
2. The Council had reformed its pay structure during 2019/20 to include pay at the UK Living Wage for Apprentices 18 plus and at 80% of that for apprentices under 18, to take effect from 1 April 2020;
3. Pay on the commencement of employment for Executive Directors and Directors Pay would now be set by the Selection Committee where it was over 10% above the minimum of the range;
4. Requests for increases in pay from Directors and Executive Directors during their employment would continue to be considered by the Human Resources Committee.
5. Any proposals for a pay increase would be brought to the Human Resources Committee and include advice and recommendations from the Head of Paid Service and Director: Workforce and Change.

Points raised/clarification given –

1. In answer to questions raised the Head of Human Resources reassured Members that the 10% criteria to determine the starting salary for the successful Executive Directors and Director candidates on appointment was already established but was reiterated for clarity in the report, it was confirmed that the Human Resources Committee would set pay as standard practice except when a request for more than 10% above the minimum of the range was made, in which case the Selection Committee would consider and decide. The narrative in the report would be clarified further to ensure that there was no misunderstanding or confusion about this;
2. The pay for all Executive Directors and Directors was published on the Council's website and actual salaries of job holders were not normally referred to Full Council for information;
3. Consideration for future benchmarking of Executive Directors and Directors pay could include wider remit e.g., other similar sized local authorities not just core cities;
4. Contract / agency staff were not included in Pay Policy Statement;
5. On costs not included in Pay Policy Statement but noted that on costs such as pension costs were included and published in the Council's Annual Accounts;
6. Noted that some service areas were unable to recruit due to less competitive pay structures. This was often due to statutory restrictions and equal pay considerations. This could be overcome by using market supplements and this was an area of work which would be looked at again.

Resolved - that Full Council be recommended to approve the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.

8. Contingent Workforce

The Committee received an update in respect of employment of agency staff via the Council's managed provider for agency staff Guidant. The report emphasised that the trend in the use of agency staff since 2016 had reduced. Expenditure on agency staff related to 4.98% of the Council's total pay bill.

Points raised/clarification given –

1. Efforts were continuing to skill up the in house workforce to reduce dependency on agency staff particularly in areas where there was high market demand such as housing, adult social care where transferable skills could be utilised;
2. Anticipated that costs would reduce as there were no longer any interim positions at senior levels;
3. Guidant had good 'buying power' which enabled a more cost effective service;
4. The Living Wage was applied to all agency staff as defined by the Council's terms and conditions.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under s.100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 4 (respectively) of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

12. Staff Led Groups - Update & Work Plan

The Committee received an update on the work of staff led groups within the Council and the external support that had been commissioned to refresh their role and also to provide advice and support on how the Council could further improve Equalities and Inclusion throughout the organisation.

The Committee learned that extensive work had been undertaken to improve the effectiveness of staff led groups in particular to improve communication between them and line managers, which included some changes of members and chairs, and greater alignment with the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members were keen to follow on from this work and it was suggested that Chairs of the Staff led groups be invited to meet with members of the Human Resources Committee.

Resolved – that the report be noted and that an informal meeting of Human Resources Committee members with the Chairs of the Staff led groups be arranged as soon as was practical.

The meeting ended at 11.40 am

CHAIR