

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

24 November 2016 at 2.00 pm



### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Helen Godwin (Chair), Paula O'Rourke (Vice-Chair), Kye Dudd, Gary Hopkins, Mike Langley, Jo Sergeant and Steve Jones

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Richard Billingham (Service Director HR), Mark Williams, James Brereton and Louise deCordova (Democratic Services Officer)

## **1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**

The Chair led welcome and introductions.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence received from Councillor Eddy. Councillor Jones in substitute.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

### **The Committee RESOLVED:**

**To agree the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.**

## **5. Chair's Business (verbal update)**

The Chair provided a verbal update as follows:

Human Resources Team



- a. The Chair confirmed that the Service Director, Human Resources would be leaving the Council at the end of January 2017. Officers to update the Committee once information regarding a new interim Service Director appointment is known. **Action: Mark Williams**

#### Exit payment cap and recovery

- b. The Exit Payment Cap and Exit Payment Recovery are each subject to separate regulations and have not yet been set before parliament. The previous report to be circulated to Members. Future updates to be provided when available. **Action: James Brereton**

#### Culture Steering Group

- c. Current objectives have focused on the staff survey and diversity. A diversity workshop was planned for the following Monday which was open to all staff. Outcomes to be shared with Members. **Action: Culture Steering Group**

#### Staff Survey

- d. Initial findings from the staff survey had been more positive than expected. Key issues for staff included learning and development opportunities and relationships between staff and very senior management level. Initial findings to be shared with members of committee.

## 6. Public Forum

The Committee noted statements as follows: (a copy of the statements has been placed in the minute book - accessed via Democratic Services).

- a. Paul Wheeler – Bristol Equality
- b. Steve Crawshaw – Unison
- c. Steve Paines – Unite
- d. Wendy Weston – GMB

The Chair advised that each submission would be taken just before each item concerned.

## 7. Chief Executive terms & conditions and performance management (report)

The Committee received a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, and considered the public forum statement submitted by Paul Wheeler, Bristol Equality in conjunction with this item. The report seeks the Committee's approval for proposals relating to the terms and conditions and performance management of the job of Chief Executive.

- a. Officers read the legal advice which had been provided in relation to the report as follows:

*The pay of the Chief Executive is set out in the Council's Pay Policy Statement, and any amendments to the Statement require the approval of the Full Council.*



*Other than in relation pay and to dismissal for poor performance and misconduct, the terms and conditions of employment for the Chief Executive are set by the Human Resources Committee.*

*The Council's Constitution currently does not provide for the performance management of the Chief Executive and any amendments to the Constitution require the approval of the Full Council.*

*Legal and HR advice should be sought when drafting the terms of the fixed term contract for the new Chief Executive.*

*Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Service Director, Legal and Democratic Services*

*Date: 15 November 2016*

- b. The facility to pay a bonus to the Chief Executive is part of the annual Pay Policy Statement, which must be approved by the Full Council. The level of that bonus (if any) would be decided by the Performance Management Panel, and not Full Council.
- c. The Chief Executive's performance objectives will be set and monitored by the Performance Management Panel. In discussion it was agreed that Full Council or the Executive Function serving the Mayor and wider council would take on this role – hence the recommendation to set up a performance panel. It was confirmed that the performance management panel could consist of the Mayor and Party Group Leaders and advisors.

#### **The Committee RESOLVED:**

- (i) To recommend to the Full Council that a Performance Management Panel be constituted to agree objectives with the Chief Executive, assess the jobholder's performance and decide what level (if any) of bonus should be awarded. The Panel to be composed of the Mayor and Party Group Leaders, supported by advisers with appropriate expertise.**
- (ii) To approve the proposed terms and conditions of employment as outlined in this report.**

#### **8. Voluntary Severance Update (report)**

The Committee considered a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, and considered the public forum statements received from Unison, Unite and GMB in conjunction with this item. The report updates the Committee on the progress to date in delivering the first phase of workforce reductions intended to contribute to the required financial savings of £29 million. The Committee is asked to note the report.

The HR Business Partner summarised the significant issues in the report. In response to members questions the following points were raised:



- a. It was recognised that in delivery of workforce reductions there would be an impact on future service delivery. Concern raised that there may not be a consistent approach across the council which could impact the morale and wellbeing of staff. It was confirmed that the Council was committed to protect and retain statutory frontline services and therefore it was not always possible to agree to voluntary severance requests in some critical service areas. Officers to provide some analysis alongside the results of the staff survey which looked at service areas like housing and adult care and services with the lowest percentage of acceptances for voluntary severance. **Action: James Brereton**
- b. The council had a duty to mitigate against compulsory redundancy and there was potential for voluntary severance opportunities to be managed in service areas once the new structures were in place
- c. There was a concern over the impact on staff diversity.
- d. It was recognised that the in-year costs of staff reduction were one off costs, but savings were ongoing year on year.
- e. It was noted that severance for staff of pensionable age would cost significantly more due to the councils duty to pick up pension strain.
- f. The Corporate Strategy proposals set out the principals for reduction of cost and ongoing management of costs. Staff waiting to see the results of the redesign process would still have recourse to take part in a voluntary severance option rather than compulsory process. Officers to provide top line level tracking of the numbers of staff leaving the organisation through voluntary severance in order to track the progress of organisation as it changes shape
- g. It was recognised that there was a risk that due to the scale of ongoing change the Council may be losing good people who may be choosing to opt out of the uncertainty and take their skills elsewhere.

**The Committee RESOLVED:**  
**To note the report, comments and actions arising.**

## **9. Use of agency staff (report)**

The Committee received a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, and considered the public forum statements from, Unite and GMB in conjunction with this item. The report updates the Committee on the Council's progress towards getting better value from its use of agency staff. The Committee is asked to note the report.

The Committee received a summary of the significant issues in the report. In response to Members questions the following points were raised:



- a. Officers to provide a regular progress report to be brought to Committee in order to track the changes in agency use across council services. The next report to outline where agency contracts have ended or where agency staff have transferred into employment. **Action: James Breton**
- b. Officers highlighted that the agency figures contained at Para 5.2 contained an incorrect figure at the time of going to print. It was not the case that *'An average of 680 FTE agency staff were employed by the Council during the first quarter. This dropped to 610 FTE during the second quarter.'* The correct data to be circulated to Committee Members. **Action: James Breton**
- c. It was noted that some employment businesses had declined to do business via the Council's preferred supplier, Guidant. The Council was reviewing existing agency contracts over 52 weeks.

(Councillor Hopkins joined the meeting.)

- d. Members recognised that there were circumstances where agency staff were the right short term solution to meet business needs however there was concern raised if this was being used to mask an unfilled post or where certain classifications of staff were being paid different rates for doing the same role.
- e. Members requested more information to understand the difference in the cost of employing about the cost of agency contracts with a breakdown by directorate with worked examples to show how the cost differed between employing permanent and agency staff in the same roles.  
**Action : James Breton**

#### **The Committee RESOLVED:**

**To note the report, comments and actions arising.**

### **10. Pay reform (report)**

The Committee received a report from the Service Director, Human Resources and Workplace, and considered the public forum statement from Unison and Unite in conjunction with this item. The report updates the Committee on plans to reform the "Single Status" (Green Book) pay spine. The Committee is asked to note the report.

- a. Officers read additional financial implications received in support of the report:

*With reference to the number of staff in BCC and in schools that these changes affect potentially, and that there are aspects of the ToFR that will have a financial implication and which will need to be fully factored into the costings of the proposed scheme going forwards. Those costings MUST be calculated over the length of the MTFP – this is because a scheme that may be cost neutral in year 1, may not be in year 2 etc. There is no provision for extra cost of a new scheme in the MTFP*



*– we have provision for pay increases, and depending on the level of those, something for increments.*

The significant issues of the report were summarised and in response to Members questions the following points were raised:

- b. Members noted that there was a shared commitment with trade unions to agree the principles for reform of the single status pay spine in a fair and transparent way.
- c. Officers confirmed that the job evaluation scoring system was an analytical way of ranking jobs.
- d. There was concern raised about the need to protect the interests of staff that could suffer detriment as part of any reform. Mitigation could be in the form of a period of pay protection.
- e. The financial impact of reforms must be calculated over the term of the medium term financial plan. The next steps needed to include a period of discussion around the budget implications, taking the opportunity to influence the budget consultations. It was confirmed that the base line was the Council's commitment to the Living Wage, and fiscal constraints. There was no cost neutral way forward.
- f. It was noted that each Local Authority was taking a different approach, Bristol was monitoring results of national benchmarking as well as the work that the Local Government Association was doing in this area.

**The Committee RESOLVED:**

**To note the report and endorse the need for this work to be included in the Council's Corporate Strategy for 2017-2022.**

## **11. Matters Arising**

### **1. Human Resources Budget**

- a. The Chair commented that the Council did not have a budget for learning and development and noted that initial results from the Staff Survey had raised this as a key issue for staff. Officers to explore the role of Human Resources Committee to challenge and apply necessary pressure to address this as part of the Council's long term planning. To be added as a discussion item to the next meeting agenda. **Action: James Brereton**
- b. Concern raised regarding difficulties caused by skills and expertise leaving the organisation; a lack of succession planning and training causing skills and knowledge gaps in service areas. Members noted that the Council's hands were tied financially however some action was required to provide organisational resilience when structures reduce.



- c. Recognised that there may be an opportunity to utilise the future apprenticeships levy to train the existing workforce as well as investing in the growth and development of a future workforce.

## 2. Future Meeting Dates

Future meeting dates to be brought forward. **Action: Democratic Services**

Meeting ended at Time Not Specified

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

