

Public Document Pack

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Human Resources Committee



22 September 2022 at 5 pm

Members present:

Councillors: Kerry Bailes, Sarah Classick, Richard Eddy, Lorraine Francis.

Officers in Attendance:

Stephanie Griffin (Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development), James Brereton (Head of HR), Mark Jefferson (Reward and Analytics Manager), Louise deCordova (Democratic Services Manager), Steve Gregory (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Councillors Lesley Alexander, Amirah Cole, Farah Hussain, Mohamad Makawi, Tim Wye.

3. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

4. Confirmation of HR Committee start time for 2022/23

Noted that following full consultation the majority of members had expressed a preference to continue the 5pm start time for HR Committee meetings.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 July 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

Matter arising

In response to a question from Councillor Bailes the Head of HR confirmed that the SEN Department had established 13.6 additional posts and subject to these posts being fully funded would not be subject to the recruitment freeze.

Councillor Bailes requested that an updated flow chart of the SEN department structure be made available and uploaded onto the council's website so that parents/carers, campaigners, SEN supporters and advocates could see the updated information. Action: Head of HR

6. Public Forum

None received.

7. Trade Union Forum

Members and representatives of GMB submitted two written statements regarding -

1. South Bristol Rehabilitation Centre – Management of Change Process.

GMB drew the Committee's attention to the way in which it was perceived that the Management of Change process had been interpreted to the detriment of some of the employees affected by the closure of South Bristol Rehabilitation Centre. It was considered that the methods were not a fair and consistent approach by the Council, using the Management of Change process, as they included directly appointing staff into posts across the other side of the city, with associated increase travelling time and costs, some staff being required to attend a competitive interview and others being subject to a TUPE transfer which potentially might have a detrimental impact upon their pension and existing terms and conditions of employment.

The Head of HR expressed concern and apologised that the experience of staff was not as we would have wished it to be. Committee then agreed that a lesson's learned report be prepared and be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

A related concern with regards the process that had been followed was raised and the Head of HR undertook to investigate and respond within the next 24 to 48 hours.

2. Outsourcing Bristol City Council Staff to Bristol Waste Company.

GMB expressed concern that they had been contacted by a number of their members, working across various disciplines, who would be or had been subject to informal meetings with management and HR regarding their potential TUPE transfer to BWC, without any business case or involvement of the recognised trade unions.

The Head of HR expressed sympathy for the TU members who had experienced this, and TU representation should have formed part of the informal discussions. It was essential that transparent and consistent communications and consultations with staff took place.

Members were advised that a response had been received from BWC and further information would be shared as soon as possible.

8. Work Programme

Members noted the updated Work Programme for 2022/23. In response to a member request a further item would be included regarding Interim staff and would be scheduled for the December or February HR

Committee. Members would be contacted with an outline proposal for the content of this report, and an opportunity to specify the areas of focus.

9. 2022 Staff Survey

The Committee received an update report on the results of the 2022 staff survey.

Members noted in particular that –

1. The Workforce Strategy set out the actions to create a working environment which helped employees perform at their best. The annual staff survey was one of the tools used to measure the impact of these actions and guide the future work programme.
2. 55% (3589) of colleagues across the organisation responded to the survey, making this the highest response rate BCC has had to an organisation-wide staff survey.
3. Overall, the 2022 results showed a continued trend of improvement in how colleagues experienced working for Bristol City Council. Though the results were largely positive, it was evident that the challenges of Covid-19 over the last two years had an impact on some of the results shown.
4. The approach to action planning would be inclusive and collaborative. Services would be encouraged to undertake their own local action planning and colleagues would be invited to participate in focus groups to help shape the action plan for cross-cutting themes.

Members discussed the Staff Survey results and key points highlighted from this were –

5. Overall members felt that the response was positive, but some concern was expressed about underlying issues that might be present as only 26% of responders felt that senior leaders understood their role/work. The Committee was assured that senior leaders were also concerned about this and had committed to 'dig deeper' into the data and work with colleagues to understand what more could be done. A Working Group has been set up for staff and senior leaders to work together to find what was behind the low score and develop actions to address this.
6. Members noted that more detailed information was available at department level and was supplemented by further break down at line manager/team level so that teams could look at their own results. Exit surveys are also used to identify reasons why staff wanted to leave the Council. The Quality-of-Life resident survey could be used as a further source of comparison data.
7. Members were given an assurance that engagement with staff to further improve response rates was an ongoing process, and feedback sources included use of QR codes to link to the survey, hard copy versions, focus groups, promotion to staff led group members and 'drop in' sessions.
8. A snapshot of data showing 'best and worst' responses at departmental level would be circulated to HR Committee members after the meeting Action: Head of Internal Communications and Organisational Development.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

10. HR Policy Consultations, National Status Pay Negotiations

Members received a verbal update from the Head of Human Resources.

1. Travel Policy discussions were ongoing with the TU side, it was anticipated that the policy would be in place by 28 November 2022 to coincide with the commencement of the Clean Air Zone.
2. Pay negotiations had taken place at national level and in July 2022 the employer side had offered a flat £1,925 pay rise across all grades, a 4.04% increase for allowances and an increase of annual leave by one day. The main UNITE, UNISON and GMB trade unions are now balloting their members.
3. The closing dates for the ballots were UNISON by 15 August, GMB by 21 October, UNITE by 14 October. If two out of three of the trade union ballots accepted the offer then it would be upheld, if not the national employer would be approached to make an improved offer.

Resolved – That the verbal update be noted.

11. HR Dashboard

Members received a verbal presentation from the Reward and Analytics Manager regarding the HR Dashboard which gave a visual representation of the metrics that the Council used to keep a track of the HR data for different departments such as sickness, diversity and pay. Several examples were given illustrating how the Council does, and could, make use of the wide variety of information available from the Dashboard including where necessary a 'deep dive' into specific areas. Of particular value was its usefulness showing the overall direction of travel of the Council as a whole and across its various departments.

Members noted the information and asked officers to select topic for deep dives at future HR Committee meetings.

12. HR Formal Disputes – Procedure to be followed

Members received a briefing on the council's disputes procedure Members noted the information.

13. 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) 1 (respectively) of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

14. Minutes of Extraordinary meeting of the HR Committee

Resolved – that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 August 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

15. Items raised that were not on the published agenda

1. A member asked a question about an update on senior manager appointments and was informed that

a new Executive Director of Children and Education had been appointed and would join the Council in December 2022, a review of the departmental structure was anticipated shortly after.

2. A question was asked about access to free early education for two-year-olds in the city, noted that applications for this could be done via the Council's website.
3. A question was asked about which forums people could get advice about SEN issues, noted that this would be passed onto the SEND team to action.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

CHAIR