

Employment Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Telscombe Room - Southover House, Lewes on 18 June 2018 at 10.00 am

Present:-

Councillor Elayne Merry (Chair)

Councillors Mike Chartier, Paul Franklin, Stephen Gauntlett and Robbie Robertson

Officers in Attendance:

Becky Cooke (Assistant Director of Human Resources and Transformation)

Zoe Downton (Committee Officer)

Helen Knight (Human Resources Manager)

Employees' Side Representative:

Graham Purdye

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In respect of health and safety matters, as referred to under Minute No. 33, the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Transformation updated members that, since the last meeting, the Health and Safety Officer had early retired. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had been considering the vacant post and reviewing the way in which health and safety was provided across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils. She explained that CMT were expected soon to finalise a way forward, in terms of the structure and recruitment of the health and safety function, and she would update members.

Resolved:

1. That the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Transformation be requested to email members of the Employment Committee before its next meeting to confirm what CMT had decided in respect of the reviewed health and safety structure and intended recruitment process.

2 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members

None reported.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were declared at the meeting.

4 Update on the Joint Transformation Programme

The Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation provided a verbal update on the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP); a restructuring programme which aimed to deliver the majority of Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council's services via shared teams and by adopting new ways of working.

Members were informed that the transition process into new ways of working was underway, following Phase Two of the restructure. Lessons had been learned from the licensing transition which had not gone smoothly. The revenues and benefits transition had been successful. Staff briefing sessions had been held (led by Corporate Management Team members), providing reflection on the JTP so far, recognising staff achievement and acknowledging the challenges. Preparation for Phase Three was underway.

Members' discussion included:

- Praise for the customer advisors for the service they were providing and their impressive breadth of knowledge when advising customers (as noted by the Chair who had spent time observing them at work).
- The current telephone switchboard options and whether there was a better telephony system for people contacting the council.

Officers responded that:

- As part of the transition work it was intended to reduce the number of switchboard options and lessen the waiting/hold times for customers, although those changes would take time to implement. Phone records would be reviewed to monitor the length of time people were put on hold.

Resolved:

1. That the verbal update on the Joint Transformation Programme be noted.

Reason:

The Employment Committee had requested regular updates regarding the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme.

5 Gender Pay Gap

The Committee received the report which sought to update members regarding the Council's gender pay gap for Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC), as the majority of staff were employed by EBC. Data for Lewes District Council had not been required to be published as it currently only had 62 people on the payroll. The appendix set out the gender pay gap report as of 31 March 2017.

Members' discussion included:

- That it was important to not be complacent and to continue to be conscientious in working to minimise the gender pay gap.

Resolved:

1. That the report and appendix be noted.

Reason:

The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 applied to private-sector and voluntary-sector employers of 250 people or more. It required employers to publish details of the gender pay gap for their organisation as it is in the pay period in which 5 April (the "snapshot" date) falls in each year from 2017 onwards. There was a separate requirement for employers to publish gender bonus gap information, based on data for those employees in receipt of bonus pay during the 12 months to 5 April.

6 Sickness Report

The Committee received the report which provided an update regarding the Council's sickness figures for the period Quarter 4 2018/18 (January – March 2018), together with the reasons for staff absences as set out in the appendices to the report.

Members' discussion included:

- Whether the reasons for stress (under appendix 2, sickness reasons) could be sub-categorised, such as indicating personal or job related stress.

Officers responded that:

- The HR Business Partners would be aware of whether a person had been off work with either job-related stress or personal stress. The Head of Human Resources had concern that further disclosure of such detail could lead to the identification of individuals, due to small teams. She would look further into whether it was possible to provide more information on the reasons for stress-related leave.
- The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Transformation advised that the combined target for Lewes and Eastbourne of 9 days per FTE (full time employee) for the financial year 2018/19 was under review and might reduce as members of the Scrutiny Committee had raised concern and also in light of Eastbourne's historically lower target (of around 5 days). Members would be kept updated.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

Reason:

The Employment Committee had requested a standing agenda item regarding the absence statistics within the council.

7 Exclusion of the public and press

Resolved:

1. That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of items 10 and 11 on the agenda as there was likely to be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8 Consideration of matters raised by the employees' side

There were no additional matters raised by the employees' side over and above those which had been recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

The Committee discussed with the employees' side representative that it might be of more value to them and the members if it ensured their meetings were arranged prior to the Employment Committee, so that full and timely discussions could be held at these meetings.

9 Consideration of health and safety matters raised by the employees' side

There were no additional health and safety matters raised by the employees' side over and above those which had been recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

10 Date of next meetingResolved:

1. That it be noted that the next meeting of the Employment Committee was scheduled to be held on Monday, 10 September 2018 in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes commencing at 10:00am; and
2. That it be noted that Councillor Robertson had declared his apology for absence at the meeting on 10 September 2018.

The meeting ended at 10.35 am

Councillor Elayne Merry (Chair)