

Employment Committee

**Minutes of meeting held in Ditchling Room - Southover House, Lewes on
3 December 2018 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor Elayne Merry (Chair)

Councillors Mike Chartier, Paul Franklin and Stephen Gauntlett

Officers in attendance:

Ed Hele (Functional Lead Quality Environment), Helen Knight
(Head of Human Resources) and Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer)

Employees' Side Representative:

Graham Purdye

24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

25 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members

An apology for absence had been received from the Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation.

26 Declarations of interest

There were none.

27 Urgent items

There were none.

28 Written questions from councillors

There were none.

29 Update on Health and Safety matters

The Functional Lead for Quality Environment (FLQE) provided a verbal update in relation to health and safety matters across Lewes District Council (LDC) and Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC).

The FLQE explained that the Specialist Advisor (Health and Safety) was currently in the process of working on a comprehensive work plan in relation to Health and Safety matters across both authorities, which included a review of the health policy statement. The Specialist Advisor (Health and Safety) had completed audits for various departments across both authorities and was intending to review fire evacuation procedures at Southover House (LDC) and 1 Grove Road (EBC), respectively. Once updated safe systems of work had been put in place, documentation would be distributed which aligned policies and procedures across both authorities in relation to health and safety matters.

The FLQE highlighted that the form for reporting accidents and a singular email address had been put in place for employees across both authorities in an effort to streamline procedures and to make it as easy and straightforward as possible when accidents and near-misses were reported. He further highlighted that in January 2019 he was meeting with a software company which provided online resolution recording in relation to accidents and near-misses across both authorities. This would make the process of reporting accidents and near-misses even more straightforward for employees and it would help put further measures in place to prevent accidents and near-misses, as both authorities would be able to retain all relevant information in a centralised database.

Resolved:

That the verbal update on health and safety matters be noted.

30 Update on the Joint Transformation Programme

The Head of Human Resources provided a verbal update on the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP); a restructuring programme (currently in phase 3) which aimed to deliver the majority of Lewes District Council (LDC) and Eastbourne Borough Council's (EBC) services via shared teams and by adopting new ways of working.

Members were informed that despite some IT issues which had been present during phase 2 of the JTP, the staff element of phase 2 was complete with the exception of Housing. Housing was the most complex transition and had been long awaited, with staff working hard on the Civica transition which was specific to Homes First.

Members were further informed that 6 service areas – Legal, Human Resources, IT, Finance, Audit and Corporate Property – were involved in phase 3. Independent reviews for Legal, Human Resources, IT and Audit

began the transition on 9 November 2018, with Finance beginning on 11 December 2018 and Corporate Property in mid-January 2019.

The Head of Human Resources added that great comments had been received from staff thus far and that many ideas for income generation had come from the service areas involved in phase 3.

Resolved:

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

31 Sickiness report

The Committee received the report which provided an update regarding the Council's sickness figures for the period quarter 2 2018/19 (1 July to 30 September 2018), together with the reasons for staff absences as set out in the appendices to the report.

The Head of Human Resources highlighted a decrease in the average number of days absence for each employee from 2.85 during quarter 2 2017 to 2.11 during quarter 2 2018. She further highlighted a reduction of absences due to stress from quarter 1, with 8 absences reported during quarter 2. Three of the absences resulted in a long term absence (more than 4 weeks).

The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that the total days lost for quarters 1 and 2 were 3.7, which put the Council on track for its target of 8 total days per employee for the year. She reminded Members that quarters 2 and 3 historically had an increased absence rate due to the winter months and that Human Resources had offered all staff members a free influenza vaccination to help mitigate the number of absences.

The Committee queried the number of absences in Case Management and whether or not the number was a reflection of the level of stress within the role. The Head of Human Resources explained that the number of absences were largely centred around Homes First due to a change in the law made by central government. She further explained that there were increased levels of homelessness, which lead to an increased work load. In response the Councils had recently recruited 7 graduates from Brighton University to assist with the increased workload.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

32 Exclusion of the public and press

Resolved:

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.

33 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.

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

The employees' side commented that it was pleased with the FLQE's verbal update in relation to health and safety matters and that it was seen as a positive way forward.

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.

35 Date of next meeting

(Note: Prior to the close of the meeting, the Committee wished to thank all staff members for their tireless effort during the rollout of the JTP, with special recognition given to the Waste and Recycling team for its seamless rollout of the new recycling service across Lewes District. The Committee further recognised the Waste and Recycling team for its commitment to working over the Christmas and New Year holidays to ensure residents would not encounter a delay in their waste and recycling services.)

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Employment Committee that is scheduled to be held on Monday, 25 March 2019 in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, commencing at 10:00am, be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am.

Councillor Elayne Merry (Chair)