

## Employment Committee

**Minutes of the remote meeting held (via Microsoft Teams) on 9 September 2020 at 2.30pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Isabelle Lington (Chair).

Councillors Nancy Bikson, Johnny Denis (Substitute) and Stephen Gauntlett.

**Staff side:** Matthew Busby

**Officers in attendance:**

Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer, Democratic Services)

Becky Cooke (Assistant Director for Human Resources and Transformation)

Ed Hele (Functional Lead - Quality Environment)

Helen Knight (Head of Human Resources)

**1 Introductions**

The Chair introduced members of the Committee via roll call, and those officers present during the remote meeting.

**2 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Roy Burman and Zoe Nicholson. Councillor Johnny Denis declared that he was acting as substitute for Councillor Nicholson for the duration of the meeting.

**3 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**4 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2019 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

- That paragraph c at the bottom of page 4 of the minutes which reads as '2 members of the Committee', be clarified to read as '2 Members (Councillors) of the Committee'.

**5 Written questions from councillors**

There were none.

## 6 Flexible Retirement Policy

The Committee considered a report which asked it to approve the alignment of the policies of Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council regarding flexible retirement.

The Head of Human Resources (HHR) presented the report. She explained that the Flexible Retirement Policy was the latest policy to be aligned across Lewes District Council (LDC) and Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) as part of the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP).

The HHR highlighted that it was a positive move to align the policies across both LDC and EBC, as it continued to allow staff members who were over the age of 55 the ability to access their pension while reducing their working hours. She further highlighted that she was pleased to report that EBC's Joint Staff Committee considered and approved the newly aligned policy at its last meeting in February 2020, and that UNISON was very supportive of the policy as well.

Discussion included:

- Clarity surrounding what constituted compassionate grounds as stated in paragraph 2 on page 21 (Appendix 1) and if it was the same as East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) definition of compassionate grounds. The HHR confirmed that the definition in relation to compassionate grounds was the same as ESCC, as ESCC was the pension provider. She also confirmed that the final version of the Flexible Retirement Policy would be amended to provide more clarity.
- The option of flexible retirement being offered to staff. The Committee was in favour of the newly aligned policy and wished to thank Officers for their hard work. The HHR agreed that the newly aligned policy was helpful in succession planning and as an adjustment into retirement for staff. She also agreed that it was a positive way forward.

Resolved:

That the newly aligned Flexible Retirement Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

## 7 Medical Redeployment Policy

The Committee considered a report which asked it to approve the alignment of the policies of Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council regarding medical redeployment.

The Head of Human Resources (HHR) presented the report. She explained that medical redeployment was different to when a member of staff is in a redundancy situation and the Council was looking to redeploy the staff member. Medical redeployment would apply when the member of staff was not

fit for their current position due to a medical reason. The HRR further explained that HR looked to redeploy staff members elsewhere within the organisation, into a suitable role following professional medical advice.

The HRR highlighted that medical redeployment had always been normal practice at both Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils, but HR had looked to align the policies across both authorities including the alignment of arrangements regarding pay protection if a member of staff is redeployed due to medical reasons. She further highlighted that pay protection arrangements were also aligned in cases where redundancy redeployment situations applied. Discussions had taken place with UNISON and the HRR was pleased to report that UNISON was supportive of the arrangements and the newly aligned policy surrounding medical redeployment.

Discussion included:

- Clarity surrounding the length of time of 12 weeks for redeployment as detailed in paragraph 3.3 on page 50, as appendix 2 noted that the length of time was 24 weeks. The HRR confirmed that the length of time was 12 weeks. This was the point when HR would formally place a member of staff on the redeployment list. Prior to that, however, HR would have been working with the member of staff before they were formally added to the medical redeployment list.
- Clarity regarding the wording in paragraph 4.2 on page 51 regarding pay protection nearly matching the level at which the pay would be preserved. There was concern that this could lead to future discrepancies. The HRR confirmed that she was happy to include more detailed information surrounding pay protection levels in the newly aligned policy.
- Whether the term medical condition, as mentioned within appendix 1, included mental health, or if mental health conditions were dealt with separately. The HRR confirmed that the Council does redeploy members of staff for a variety of medical conditions including mental health, and that the term medical redeployment included mental health conditions. She further confirmed that the wording in the newly aligned policy would be amended to clarify that mental health conditions were included as a medical condition.

Resolved:

That the newly aligned Medical Redeployment Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

## **8 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, 11 and 12 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.

## **9 Attendance Management Report**

The Committee received the Officer's report which provided an update regarding the Council's sickness figures for the period Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 September 2019) and Quarter 3 2019/2020 and the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.

### Resolved:

That the Quarter 2 (1 July to 30 September 2019) and Quarter 3 2019/2020 (1 October to 31 December 2019) sickness figures and the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, be noted.

## **10 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.

## **11 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.

## **12 Date of next meeting**

### Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee (which replaces the Employment Committee) which is scheduled to take place on Monday, 7 December 2020, at 2.30pm, be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.

Councillor Isabelle Linington (Chair)