

Employment Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 December 2019 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillor Margrave (Chairman); Councillors Cooke, Day, B Gifford, Jacques, Kennedy, Kohler (arrived late), Tangri (arrived late), Tracey and Wright.

21. Apologies and Substitutes

- (a) there were no apologies made; and
- (b) Councillor Cooke substituted for Councillor Hales.

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

23. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2019 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24. Minutes – Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2019 were noted.

25. Public and Press

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

| Minute Nos. | Para Nos. | Reason |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| 26 - 29 | 1 | Information relating to an individual |
| 26 - 29 | 2 | Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. |

The full minutes of the following items would be detailed in the confidential minutes of the meeting.
(Councillor Tangri arrived at the meeting.)

26. **Programming and Marketing Team Review (Art Section, Cultural Services)**

The Committee considered a confidential report from Cultural Services which set out the establishment changes that would be required to support the proposed re-design of the Programme and Marketing team within Cultural Services.

Resolved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

27. **Revision to the Senior Management Team of Warwick District Council**

The Committee considered a confidential report from the Chief Executive which set out proposals to make minor revisions to the Senior Management Team of Warwick District Council.

Resolved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

(The Human Resources Manager left the room whilst this item was considered.)

(Councillor Kohler arrived part-way through consideration of this item and therefore did not vote on it.)

28. **Revision of Housing Services Staffing Structure**

(Councillor Gifford left part-way through this item and did not return.)

The Committee considered a report from Housing Services which set out the establishment changes required to support the proposed re-design of the Housing Service.

Resolved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

29. **Neighbourhood Services Programme Team**

The Committee considered a report from Neighbourhood Services which set out proposals to create a Public Realm Programme Team within the Service Area.

Resolved that the recommendations in the report be approved.

(The meeting resumed in public session.)

30. **People Strategy Update**

The Committee considered a report from Human Resources which gave an update on the progress made on the People Strategy Action Plan and associated areas as discussed at the People Strategy Steering Group (PSSG), the Joint Communication Forum (JCF), Members/Trades Unions

Joint Consultation & Safety Panel (MTU) and Senior Management Team (SMT).

Members of the PSSG, which met quarterly, were Councillors Falp, Mangat, Margrave, B Gifford and Wright, supported by the Chief Executive, Heads of Service for Culture, Neighbourhood Services, Housing and the HR Manager and HR Senior Business Partners.

The purpose of the People Strategy was to support the Council's Fit for the Future programme of work. Its aim was to ensure that the approaches to resourcing, learning and development, cultural change and organisational development were designed to deliver the workforce that the Council required. The People Strategy Action Plan underpinned the People Strategy and reported progress to SMT, CMT, People Strategy Steering Group and Employment Committee.

The report highlighted areas of success within the People Strategy themes for the last quarter:

- Leadership and Organisational Development – with HR staff supporting organisation restructuring across the Council.
- Workforce Planning and Performance – giving an update on the Apprenticeship Scheme operating at the Council. Of particular note was that three of the apprentices had secured employment with the Council during the last quarter. Details of the other apprenticeship positions were also given in the report.
- Equality and Diversity – with the Council continuing to provide training and review its three-year plan in liaison with the Warwickshire County Council specialist on Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA).
- Learning and Development – People and Change workshops had been launched to support all employees to cope positively with changes in their work and personal lives. Training continued for managers to handle staff absenteeism, and MetaCompliance eLearning courses were ongoing to ensure staff understood GDPR and data handling requirements. There was also an initiative to improve the staff appraisal process.
- Communications, Involvement and Engagement – the report detailed key external initiatives undertaken during the last quarter. It also advised that the Works Perks employee discount scheme now had over 160 users (this also included Councillors), and Social Media engagement with the Public was continuing to grow with over 150 new followers on the Council's Facebook pages, and the Twitter account had 10,000 followers.
- Employee Well-being, Reward and Recognition – 58% of employees had joined the Health and Wellbeing Cash Plan membership and this had been rolled out to new Members.

Members suggested that the Health and Wellbeing Cash Plan should be promoted again to staff because of the relatively small uptake.

The Committee was asked to note changes to the Council's Long Service Award. The current system recognised 20 years' continuous employment with a long service award, and it was proposed to extend this to recognise 30 and 40 years' continuous service at the Council, effective from 11 December 2019.

After the Employee Code of Conduct had been approved by Council in January 2019, certain changes had come to light and would therefore need further approval by Council. The Committee was asked to recommend to Council the changes as detailed in the Appendix 1 to the report.

The Committee was also asked approve an update to the Flexible Retirement Policy as detailed under recommendation 2.4 in the report. This update would mean that requests for early/flexible retirement would no longer need to be submitted to the Employment Committee for approval, the authority to do this being delegated to the Corporate Management Team (CMT). Requests to fund waiving early retirement reductions had to be supported by the Head of Service and reported and approved by the Executive. The circumstances in which this could occur were also more clearly defined and the new definition of "Exceptional Circumstances".

The Employment Committee was asked to approve the withdrawal of the Staff Suggestion Scheme because no one could recall the last time a suggestion had been made; staff currently expected to suggest innovation as part and parcel of their daily routines.

Recommendation 2.6 of the report sought Employment Committee support for a recommendation to go forward from it to Council for the revision of the responsibilities the Committee currently held in respect of staffing structures below Chief Executive level (i.e. excluding Heads of Service, Deputy Chief Executives and Chief Executive). The revision would mean the responsibility for any restructures below Chief Executive level would be delegated to the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service. The Human Resources Manager advised the Employment Committee that should it be minded to approve Recommendation 2,6 in the report, it should stipulate that the changes be effective from 11 December 2019 so that it was absolutely clear that it still had authority to approve recommendations on staffing structure changes for the rest of the items on the agenda.

Resolved that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the discretionary Long Service Award agreed at the Workforce Steering Group in August 2019 to recognise 30 and 40 years' long service in addition to the existing contractual Long Service Award be noted. Details:
 - a gift to the value of £370 cash plus VAT;
 - or
 - £370 cash (taxable) which will be paid as part of the salary; or
 - A one-off entitlement to two weeks' additional leave;
- (3) the update to the Flexible Retirement Policy as detailed below for exceptional circumstances, be approved:

"Exceptional Circumstances"

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations allow employers the discretion to waive the pension reduction. This will only be possible in exceptional circumstances for example, on compassionate grounds or as an alternative to retirement on grounds of redundancy or efficiency, if there is a strong business case. The Council has adopted the following definition of "compassionate grounds" for waiving pension reductions which is;

- The Council may choose to waive this reduction in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the employee has had to amend their working arrangements to care for a chronically ill partner.
- Ill-health which does not meet the ill-health retirement criteria for an enhanced pension where the reduction in hours is supported by an Independent Occupational Health Adviser."; and

- (4) the withdrawal of the Staff Suggestion Scheme, be approved.

Recommended to Council that:

- (1) the updated Employee Code of Conduct as set out at Appendix A to the minutes, be approved;
- (2) the responsibility of the Employment Committee is amended so that it is revised to read as follows (*italics* additions, ~~struck through~~ deletions):

To approve *amendments to the staff establishment in respect of Chief Officers of the Council, as defined in Article 12 of the Constitution*, in accordance with the Council's agreed budget; and

- (3) the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, be delegated authority to:
"make all changes to the establishment/structure of the council below the level of Chief Officers, as defined in Article 12 of the Constitution", in accordance with the Council's agreed budget."

(The meeting ended at 7.18 pm)

CHAIRMAN
15 September 2020