

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
8 JULY 2020
6.30 - 7.40 PM



Present:

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Bhandari, Dudley, Neil, Tullett and Wade

Non-Voting Co-optee Present:

Councillor Heydon

Also Present:

Councillor

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Porter

Councillor

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Leake be elected Chairman of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Allen be appointed Vice Chairman of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

3. Appointment of Sub and Advisory Groups

RESOLVED that the Education Employment Sub Committee, Personnel Appeals Panel and Local Joint Committee Membership for the 2020/21 municipal year is as below:

**Education Employment - Sub Committee of Employment Committee
(7 Councillors)**

Conservative (6) Labour (1)
Allen (Chairman Elect) Neil
Bhandari
Leake
Porter
Tullett
Wade (Vice-Chairman Elect)

Non-voting Members of the Teachers Associations:

David Allais (UNISON)
Graham Jackson (NASUWT)
Gregory Wilton (NUT)
Asia Allison (GMB)

Substitute Members

Conservative (3) Labour (3)
Angell Brown
Brossard Temperton
Mrs Hamilton

**Personnel Appeals Panel – Sub Committee of Employment Committee
(5 Councillors)**

Five Councillors drawn from the Employment Committee in the first instance as follows:

- At least one Executive Member and one opposition Member
- Three other Members
- Up to three substitutes per political group(s)

Members must not have had any previous involvement in the matter being considered.

Chief Executive to agree the appointments in accordance with the wishes of the political group(s)

**Local Joint Committee, Consultative Committee of Employment
Committee (4 Councillors)**

Conservative (4)
Allen
Angell
Leake (Chairman elect)
Wade

Staff side representatives
David Allais (Unison)
Vacant (Unison)
Nikki Dancey (GMB)
Substitute Members
Conservative (3)
Bhandari
Porter
Tullett

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Update from the Chairman of Sub Committees and Committee Review

The Chairman update the Committee that Local Joint Committee had been held earlier in the afternoon and had covered the items that were on the Employment Committee agenda. There were no particular issues raised. The Chairman also paid

his respects to Lorna Cameron who had been a long standing member on the Local Joint Committee and had asked for condolences to be passed on to family and colleagues.

Councillor Allen provided an update on the Education Employment Sub Committee, which had been held informally due to the timing of the meeting. The Committee rarely met but gave the Unions relating to school the opportunity to ask questions. These included the local lockdown process in Bracknell Forest, any contractual issues for the return of staff to schools in the summer and autumn terms and If there were any financial support for staff. Paul Young was the officer in attendance and had provided the Unions with their answers.

The Chairman had requested that the terms of reference be included on the Employment Committee agenda as the three meetings all fell on the same afternoon and there was often repetition for members and officers. However, on reflection it was agreed that the meetings should remain as separate committees.

It was raised that previously there had been a Health & Safety Committee which had since been disbanded but it was thought that the committee's role would be undertaken by the Local Joint Committee or Education Sub Committee. The Clerk, Hannah Stevenson, would look into the matter outside of the meeting and circulate the findings.

8. **Parental Bereavement Leave**

The Assistant Director: HR reported that new legislation had been introduced in April 2020 in relation to the death of a child. The report set out the options regarding support for staff who experienced the loss of a child and to pay an enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave for two weeks for all staff, rather than the statutory minimum amount for qualifying staff.

The bereavement of a child was a significant loss to an employee and the legislation had been introduced to allow employees a statutory right to time off. The right to be paid was dependent on length of service with an organisation.

The Council's current policy was to pay for up to one-week compassionate leave on full pay

As a result of the Members comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The statutory minimum service was the criteria that the Council could claim back the statutory amount.
- The Assistant Director was having regular regional catch up with HR Directors' and all were on board with the same approach to enhance the pay to 2 weeks. It was thought that this was also the national approach, but the Assistant Director: HR would confirm this.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee agree the options outlined below regarding support for staff experiencing loss of a child and approve the recommendation to pay an enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave for two weeks for all staff, rather than the statutory minimum amount for qualifying staff.

This would be consistent with other employment rights where an enhanced rate has been applied rather than the statutory minimum, i.e. annual leave,

parental leave, maternity leave.

9. **Challenges and Successes during Covid19**

The Committee received a presentation on challenges and successes during Covid19. The information within the presentation had been gathered at recent two manager forums, rather than a full survey of all managers. The forums had been broken into facilitated breakout groups who were asked two questions:

- What aspects of working have gone well that we may want to preserve in our new normal?
- What aspects of work have been problematic and challenging?

The presentation would be circulated to all committee members following the meeting.

As a result of members comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The presentation looked very positive.
- An O&S task and finish group was being held on isolation and loneliness and it was requested that any information be fed into this group.
- A stress audit hadn't been undertaken, but three strands of risk assessment had been, which ensured staff had undertaken a DSE workstation set up survey at home, a home working risk assessment was under constant review by staff and recently a further vulnerable group risk assessment had been sent out to those in that fitted into the vulnerable category. But the Assistant Director would take back the Stress Survey to the Assistant Director: Delivery, who was responsible for Health and Safety.
- Managers forums happened regularly, and these were in place prior to COVID19.
- The staff survey included managers, and this would be undertaken quarterly as a temperature check.
- It was important to ensure data was taken confidentially.
- Many of the comments made, were already being actioned.
- For some staff, work was also a social activity, a counselling service had been provided which was available 24/7. Managers were ensuring that work was not all about targets and outputs. Many teams were having virtual weekly socials and quizzes.
- It was important to recognise those staff who were isolated without prying into people personal lives.

The committee noted the information provided within the presentation.

10. **Wellbeing Survey**

The Committee received a presentation on the staff wellbeing which had been undertaken with all staff. It was the intention that this would be undertaken quarterly.

There had been 589 responses, which was 44% off staff. Which was very good for a staff survey response.

The Committee would receive a copy of the presentation.

Arising from the member's comment and question, the following points were made:

- The Assistant Director: HR wasn't sure the exact break down of female staff across the council and in schools.
- The survey had been undertaken using a platform called objectives, which would have been accessible on a number of devices, including mobile phones.
- The survey was anonymous, the lowest drill down was to service level.
- The survey was undertaken in June, a whole report with more detail would be brought back to the committee, including the questions.
- There were a number of options being put together for the future of Time Square going forward.
- If there was a vaccination, there wasn't a demand for all staff to return to the office, it was doubted that the office would ever be as full as it was pre Covid-19.
- Any options surrounding Time Square would be brought to members for decision.

The committee noted the information provided within the presentation.

11. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to any individual (Item 13).

12. **Furloughed Staff**

The Committee were provided with an overview of Bracknell Forest Council employees who had been put forward under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

CHAIRMAN