

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
13 DECEMBER 2017
7.30 - 8.40 PM



Present:

Councillors McLean (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Mrs Birch, Ms Miller, Mrs Temperton, Virgo, Worrall and Peacey (Substitute)

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Leake

29. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

30. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 4 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

32. Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee

Councillor Angell reported that Unison had raised concerns that a staff member had reported that she was getting paid under the Bracknell Forest Supplement rate. The Chief Officer: Human Resources would be looking into the matter and reporting back to Local Joint Committee.

There had been positive feedback around the Volunteering Policy, however concerns were raised about how the expenses would work and the Union Reps thought there should be a mechanism introduced to record formal feedback from the volunteers.

Under Union Matters, Unison raised serious concerns about the Adult Social Care staff consultation which was deemed inadequate as the consultation didn't seem to be seeking a response, but telling staff what would be done. The Chief Officer: Human Resources would be meeting with Adult Social Care and Unison to discuss the issue and would be reporting back to Local Joint Committee at the next meeting.

33. Annual Update of the Council's Pay Policy Statement and Annual Review of Bracknell Forest Supplement

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that in accordance with the 2011 Localism Act the Council was required to publish a Pay Policy Statement. In addition, the report also addressed the forth annual assessment of the Bracknell Forest Supplement which would take effect from 1 April 2018.

Since the agenda had been published the Joseph Rowntree Trust had reviewed and published their living wage recommendation. This was an increase to £8.75. Financial modelling needed to be undertaken and a report would be brought back to the Employment Committee setting out any implications of the increase.

In response to the Committee's queries the following points were made:

- The Joseph Rowntree Trust published the living wage recommendations, this was a higher value than the national living wage.
- The Committee had agreed in 2014 to adopt the Joseph Rowntree Trust living wage recommendation to uplift the hourly rate of the lowest paid employees.
- This was a national figure, rather than geographical.
- The Government recognised and accepted the Joseph Rowntree Trust research and used the data for their national living wage.
- The Bracknell supplement was a voluntary supplement to increase hourly rates to £8.45. This was paid as a flat rate.
- It was requested that a report on the Bracknell Supplement be brought back to the next Employment Committee for discussion given that the Joseph Rowntree Trust had published their recommendation of £8.75.
- There was a statutory requirement to publish the Pay Policy Statement.
- The Pay Policy statement could be reviewed at any time, but any changes made had to be agreed by Council.

RECOMMENDED that

- i) Council agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19.
- ii) the level of the Bracknell Forest Supplement from 1 April 2018 remain unchanged, as there is no change to the recommended non-statutory "Living Wage", currently £8.45ph and that this is reviewed of and when the recommended living wage is reviewed by the Joseph Rowntree Trust.

34. **Volunteering Policy**

The Committee received a report setting out the new Volunteering Policy which set out a consistent framework for managers recruiting and managing volunteers across Council Services. The policy had been developed by the Transformation team in conjunction with Involve and HR.

The policy, including the expenses element, would be reviewed after 12 months to see if anything else needed to be added or changed.

In response to the Committee's queries the following points were made:

- Services areas would decide whether to cover the costs of DBS checks, as not all volunteers would need them.
- Employees DBS checks were paid by the Council.
- The Council undertook its own DBS checks to ensure they were at the correct level and did not accept DBS checks undertaken by other organisations.
- Workshops had previously been undertaken with volunteers to gather their views.
- Members raised that formal feedback needed to be captured from volunteers in some way, perhaps by an annual survey. This had also been raised by Local Joint Committee.

- It was unknown how much it would cost to process an expenses claim. This would be analysed over the next 12 months and reviewed.
- Food and drink expenses had been included in the policy, the impact would be assessed and reviewed over the next 12 months.
- The Policy was welcomed and Members congratulated the staff on the work they had undertaken pulling the policy together.
- It had been reported that there were already 56 volunteers in the libraries across Bracknell Forest.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Volunteering Policy at Annex A of the Director of Resources Report, be approved by Employment Committee.
- ii) the payment of expenses be at the discretion of the relevant manager, having regard to the needs of the service
- iii) the policy be reviewed in 12 months as the levels of volunteering increase across the Council.

35. Annual Report on Retirements and Redundancies

The Committee received an annual report which showed the capital costs and savings on early retirements, redundancies and ill health retirements for the past 12 months. The report also showed the previous two years data as a comparison.

The number of redundancies over the age of 55 made redundant and had access to their pension had increased in 2016/17 compared to the previous two years. This was due to an increased number of restructures and the closure of Heathlands and the Education Library Service.

The Committee noted the report.

36. Redundancy Authorisation: Change to Procedure

The Committee received a report informing them of the proposed changes to the redundancy authorisation procedure. The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that the proposed changes were to customer practice rather than the terms of reference.

The report proposed that Employment Committee would become consultees at a much earlier stage in any proposed redundancy exercise resulting in five or more proposed redundancies. If there were less than five redundancies approval would be delegated to CMT.

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

- Being brought in at an earlier stage would place the Committee in a more positive position.

- The Committee would be consulted when five or more redundancies were proposed. In this instance the Chair would call for a special meeting to be held.
- The Chairman was satisfied that the five redundancies was an appropriate and reasonable number to be consulted on.
- If there were twenty or more redundancies Government had to be informed.
- The changes would allow the Committee to be proactive rather than reactive.
- It was important to have a role early in the process.

RESOLVED that

- i) Employment Committee note the change to custom and practice in relation to redundancy authorisation and is consulted when a need for a change involving redundancies of five or more is identified, via a copy of the report to CMT sent to the Employment Committee chair, and for the Chairman to call a meeting within two weeks if required.
- ii) following staff and Member consultation and the completion of the organisational change process, the appropriate Director having consulted with CMT authorises any redundancies arising.

37. Monitoring the Council's Workforce Report - 2016/17

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that the Council had a legal duty to publish their workforce composition, with the intention of advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promote good relations between people. If discriminatory practices were identified, these would be investigated.

The Committee was asked to note the report and endorse and agree the strategy set out in the report which would seek to ensure that the workforce was representative of the population it was serving.

The Council had an action plan and KPIs to ensure it was delivering on its equality objectives. It was reported that there was nothing of concern to report and that the Council was exceeding targets.

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

- Performance Indicator LO7O was a voluntary staff declaration.
- The percentage, 15.34% in 3.3 of the report, would be checked and removed if not necessary.
- There was historically high turnover within schools. Staff were currently working closely with schools to manage the turnover and assist with recruitment.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Reports and endorses the strategies proposed for 2017/18.

38. 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 (Items 12 & 13 in the Agenda, item 39 & 40 in the minutes).

39. **Restructuring in the Central Post and Support Team**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this restructure had led to the deletion of four posts. Two of these posts were vacant and two permanent posts would be made redundant with effect from 31 March 2018. This was in advance of the implementation of the new digital post room.

RESOLVED that

- i) the amendments to the structure of the Central Post and Support Team with effect from 31 March 2018 is noted. The current structure is detailed at Appendix one, and the proposed structure at Appendix two of the Director of Resources – HRs report.
- ii) the new structure is partly achieved by deletion of vacant posts within the Central Post and Support team, and the deletion of the Central Post and Support Officer post, currently employed in a temporary contract, with effect from the end of the contract on 31st March 2018.
- iii) two permanent posts (Central Post and Support Team Manager and Courier/Central Post and Support Assistant) would be made redundant with effect from 31 March 2018 subject to suitable redeployment.

40. **Proposed Redundancies - Forestcare**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that redundancies were being made as a result of the service reorganisation in Forest Care.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee note the postholders, identified in the Exempt Appendix A of the Chief Officer: Housing, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing's report, as redundant with effect from 31 December 2017.

CHAIRMAN