

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
10 OCTOBER 2012
7.30 - 8.30 PM**



Present:

Councillors McLean (Chairman), Mrs Birch (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Davison, Leake, Mrs Temperton and Worrall

Apologies for Absence were received from:

Councillors Allen and Ward

In Attendance:

Tony Madden, Chief Officer: Human Resources

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business raised.

14. Minutes of Sub Groups

The Committee noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 18 September 2012.

15. Monitoring the Council's Workforce

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this was the eleventh year the Council had compiled this information and that it had a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people. It also helped to remove any potential barriers to employment which may arise.

The Chief Officer reported that it had been an atypical year as there had been a large number of redundancies arising from the reorganisation required to balance the Council's budget and a large scale TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations) exercise. The size of the redundancy exercise had meant that the profile of age and disability of leavers did not follow the usual patterns and that the number of individuals taking early retirement as a proportion of the workforce were also higher than normally expected.

The statistics had also been impacted by the move by Ranelagh Secondary School to become an academy; which had meant that 175 staff had left the Council's employment which gave an unrealistic picture of the staff turnover rate.

Committee members queried the employment status of school staff and the extent to which the Council was liable for the staff. The Chief Officer agreed to ask the Borough Solicitor to provide a briefing note for members on this issue.

Committee members queried how new posts were approved. The Chief Officer indicated that control of the staffing establishment was exercised through the Devolved Staffing Budget. The Chairman stated that the budget was an Executive function and this did not fall under the remit of the Employment Committee. Further, if members wished to pursue this, they could contact the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission as the Commission would be considering officers delegated powers within its work programme.

16. **Staff Survey 2011**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that the employee response rate to the Staff Survey of just under 63% represented a considerable improvement on previous years. He stated that given that the survey had been undertaken at an unsettling time for staff with pay freezes and a large number of redundancies being made, it was reassuring to see that the comments had been largely positive. These comments had been echoed by Local Joint Committee members.

There were however a small number of issues which the survey highlighted where improvements could be made; these were being addressed through an action plan.

In response to members' queries, the Chief Officer stated that the response rate to the survey had been improved by assuring staff that their responses would be kept confidential and by ensuring that those who did not have access to electronic copies of the survey were able to access paper copies to complete.

Members agreed that the results of the survey were largely positive, but queried what more could be done to improve internal communications and different sections of the Council working together more effectively. The Committee asked that the Director of Corporate Services be invited to attend their next meeting to discuss the action plan.

17. **Local Government Pension Scheme**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources outlined the principal changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). He reported that after many months of protracted discussions and negotiations by the government and the trade unions, a new Scheme had been agreed.

In response to members' queries, the Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that a series of briefings and surgeries were being run for staff to ensure they were given the opportunity to ask questions and understand the new scheme.

The Committee noted the report.

18. **Exclusion of Public and Press (S100A)**

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for

consideration of item 19 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under category 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(1) Information relating to any individual

19. **Personnel Appeals Panel Minutes**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Personnel Appeals Panel minutes held on 23 July 2012.

20. **Date of Next Meeting**

5 December 2012

CHAIRMAN