

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
18 DECEMBER 2023
7.30 - 7.55 PM**



Present:

Councillors Pickering (Chair), Gillbe (Vice-Chair), Allen and McLean

Present Virtually:

Councillors Forster, Thompson and Watts

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

12. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 08 February 2023 were approved.

13. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business

14. Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee

The Committee was advised that the Local Joint Committee had discussed item 7 on the agenda. There had been questions on what work was being done to review and analyse the relatively high percentage of BAME leavers within the workforce. There had also been a request to amend the Grievance, Disciplinary and Capability graph within the report so that each year was shown incrementally.

The Committee was also advised that the trade unions had raised an ongoing incident at a Bracknell Forest Council primary school. The trade unions had raised concerns over the impact of this incident on staff and urged the Bracknell Forest Council to take legal action, as well as requesting a meeting between the school in question and Bracknell Forest Council.

15. Minutes of Sub Groups

The Committee received and noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 05 July 2023.

16. Monitoring the Council's Workforce - 2022/23

The Committee considered the Council's Annual Workforce Monitoring Report. There had been difficulties in getting a complete set of data from the workforce particularly

around disabilities where 49% of staff had not disclosed their disability status. Furthermore 10% of the workforce had not identified their ethnicity. HR would be undertaking work in the subsequent months to try and identify why staff members were not comfortable providing this data.

The data and analysis produced in the Annual Monitoring Report would be shared with the Equalities Group as well as each department's management team, from which an action plan would be produced. An area which had particularly been identified as an area for action was leavers in the first year of employment, with a particular focus on BAME leavers. Progress on this action plan would be brought before the Employment Committee in 2024.

Since the previous Workforce Monitoring Report, a new system had been implemented of HR touch in periods after the 1st, 4th and 8th month of employment. At each of these stages employees have been receiving questionnaires on their experiences thus far at Bracknell Forest Council. Furthermore, there had been work undertaken to try and get more detailed responses within exit questionnaires, particularly when the reason given for leaving employment was personal reasons. Following the Committee's comments and questions, the following points were made:

- It was difficult to draw analysis from the data on employees with disabilities due to such a sizeable percentage of the workforce not disclosing this information.
- The drop in numbers of staff from ethnic minorities in the top 5% only accounts for around 3 members of staff due to it being from such a small group of employees. However, this would continue to be monitored and progress would be reviewed against the action plan.
- Whilst an anonymous survey on disabilities could provide some data, it wouldn't allow the Council to register this information against employees which required for the Workforce Monitoring Report.
- Despite attempts over the previous few years to encourage staff to disclose whether they have any disabilities, there has only been minimal improvements, with a rise in around 4% in the previous 3 years.
- Any dismissals for poor health must be in accordance with the Council's HR policies, which would have involved a thorough process with multiple stages which would include; supporting the individual, looking for redeployment opportunities and ill health retirement, with any dismissal for ill health only ever having been used as a last resort. Bracknell Forest Council has not had any recent appeals over a dismissal which suggests the system is robust.
- Each individual department's action plan would include break downs of staff by ethnicity, so action can be taken if performance varies significantly between departments.

RESOLVED that the Workforce Monitoring Report 2023/23 is reviewed and agreed for publication.

CHAIRMAN