

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
10 JULY 2019
7.30 - 8.10 PM



Present:

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

Non-Voting Co-optee Present:

Councillors Heydon

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2019 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 the Local Joint Committee

The Chairman advised that he had met with Trade Union colleagues earlier to discuss tonight's meeting and their comments would be brought up as the items were discussed.

8. Minutes of Sub Groups

The Committee noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 13 February 2019.

9. Social Media Policy

The Committee received a report on the Council's Social Media Policy.

Trish Barnard, Head of HR and Employee Experience advised that at the Chairman's briefing meeting, it had been decided by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive that the Policy required a thorough review and potential re-write and feedback was therefore required from the Committee in order to do so.

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

- Feedback from Trade Union colleagues was that the Policy was too lengthy and should just be presented as guidance.

- Trade Union representatives had felt the requirement for staff to be 'politically neutral' with regard to joining in with community conversations online could be considered contentious.
- Posts regarding vulnerable people on the 'We Love Bracknell' Facebook page should be removed.
- With regard to complaints about social media content not involving staff, the Policy stated that the communications and marketing team would work with Thames Valley Police and 'internally' if the posts broke the law or put vulnerable people at risk, but the Committee felt the Council's legal team should also be involved in such cases.
- No incidents involving officers on social media had been reported but there had been incidents involving members which had come to light.
- It was felt the Policy placed too much emphasis on GDPR and should instead be more generic in relation to the Data Protection Act in anticipation that the UK's departure from the EU would mean that many of the derogations would not come into effect - although 95% of the Council's staff had already undertaken GDPR training.
- Staff were restricted from using social media sites on council provided IT equipment, which included accessing personal bank accounts, for example, which meant there should be no significant impact on the bandwidth and internet speed affecting the council's e-mail system and data platforms.

RESOLVED that the Council's Social Media Policy in its current form be not approved but would be brought back to the Committee in October 2019 in a shortened format with supplementary guidance for further review.

10. **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 items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to any individual (Items 9 & 10).

11. **Recruitment and Retention**

The Committee received a report on the current developments led by HR in relation to Recruitment and Retention including the Council's current approach to the use of market premia payments.

Members were advised that market premia payments were evaluated on an annual basis but that a more robust job evaluation system was being worked towards with the aim of making market premia payments unnecessary. This was because an annual market premia review was a large piece of work and time consuming with regard to obtaining market evidence, in particular because the market did not change much over a 12-month period. However, there were four roles for which market premia payments were currently being paid, three of which were last reviewed in 2010, which were therefore in urgent need of review:

- Principal Procurement Officer
- Principal Building Control Surveyor
- Senior Building Control Surveyor
- Head of Audit & Risk Management

The Report detailed the comparative data which had been collated in support of retaining the market premia payment in the above roles. Members were advised that the role could not be moved into a higher band – which would remove the need for the a market premia payment – without changing the role as that would leave the Council open to a challenge of equal pay for equal value.

Members were advised that market premia payments were not pensionable.

The Chief Executive said that when new vacancies arose, the position should not be re-advertised twice without the market premia as a means of testing the market – as set out in Appendix A of the Report – and therefore asked that this was removed. Instead, the market should be tested by way of searching for the equivalent role on various search engines and other platforms including other local authorities recruiting to the same post. The resultant data would provide the comparative evidence required by CMT to substantiate whether the role should continue to receive the market premia payment.

RESOLVED that

- i. The significant developments to date led by HR to advance the image of the Council and attract/retain quality candidates be noted.
- li That the following positions retain the market premium payments:
 1. Principal Procurement Officer - 12.5%
 2. Principal & Senior Building Control Surveyors – 15%
 3. Head of Audit and Risk Management - 15%
- iii. The principles outlined in the report be agreed and the document in Appendix 1 outlining the market premia principles be endorsed.
- iv. Approval for Market Premia payments to officers be delegated to CMT, in consultation with the Chairman of the Employment Committee, within the parameters outlined in the market premia principles.
- v. The review of the job evaluation process and reduction in market premia be noted.

All market premia reviews be consolidated with the next review for all market premia positions (including Children's Social Care) to be presented to the Employment Committee in March 2020 in line with the Children's Social Care review.

12. HR Policy Review

The Committee received a Report which provided details of how the centralised HR structure supported directorates and which also detailed progress on the review of HR policies and guidance which had commenced in late 2018.

Approximately 50 policies were under review which would be carried out in order of priority with managing sickness absence and the grievance and disciplinary policies being the most urgent. Once any changes had been made to policies and/or guidance, they would be brought back to the Committee by way of an executive summary which would set out what the changes were and the implications thereof.

The Report contained a chart showing the HR structure and it was noted that whilst Health & Safety were included in the structure, the department had in fact transferred to Property in 2018.

Members were advised that the review was part of a much larger piece of work aimed at supporting staff and managers to achieve more autonomy so that the HR team could concentrate on the more strategic elements of the function. The work also included staff training and guidance for employees and managers to help prevent things from going wrong and a return to face-to-face contact between HR and staff rather than via e-mail.

It was agreed that the wellbeing of staff needed to be aligned with the Public Health agenda and this would be achieved by maintaining a Health & Wellbeing programme for staff.

CHAIRMAN