

**LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE  
10 FEBRUARY 2021  
4.00 - 5.05 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Allen, Angell and Wade

**Non-Voting Co-optee Present:**

David Allais, UNISON & Keith Roberts, GMB

**6. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**7. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 July 2020, were approved as a correct record.

**8. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**9. Employment Committee: Agenda and Related Matters**

**i. Health & Safety Assessment Report**

The Assistant Director: Property Services reported that it was the council's general duty to look after staff's wellbeing when working at home and in the office. This was in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002). As a result of COVID 19 and the changes with working arrangements, the report summarise the results of Display Screen Equipment assessments, Home working assessments, Completion of eLearning package "Display Screen Equipment and "BAME" vulnerable group assessments which had been undertaken since end of November 2020. Since the report had been published a further 40 homeworking assessments had been undertaken.

Concerns were raised that there had been a low return rate in the People directorate, but it was thought this was a due to a large number of staff being field based, it was suggested that the report needed to show this going forward.

**ii. Pay Policy Statement 2020-21**

The Director: Resources reported that since 2012, and in accordance with the 2011 Localism Act, the Council had been required to publish an annual Pay Statement. The report was retrospective as it had already been agreed by Council.

**iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – Wellbeing Check in Survey Results**

The Director: Resources gave an overview of the Wellbeing Check in Survey Results which was undertaken with staff in October 2020. The survey had had a good response, follow up action was planned, and another survey due to take place next month.

Concerns were raised by GMB that staff had felt the pressure to work longer hours since working from home and wondered whether enough was being done to support these staff effectively.

Paul Young, Head of HR and Contracted Services confirmed that support had been put in place for staff to help them with the change of culture and training was being provided to managers on the new leadership and management style required.

#### **iv. Homeworking Policy**

Paul Young, Head of HR and Contracted Services reported that following the increase in homeworking as a result of the pandemic, a policy to address homeworking had been produced to formalise an increase in homeworking and the procedure for requests for extended homeworking. Some contracts of employment may need to be modified to align with the new homeworking policy and any individual that could not work from home were addressed in the policy. The group were also advised that this policy was only applicable to non-school based employees.

UNISON thanked officers for allowing to participate in the forming of the policy and for being engaged from an early stage.

It was confirmed that core hours were still in place, but there was an expectation work hour may change to fit around service demands.

#### **v. Organisational Change Protocol**

Paul Young, Head of HR and Contracted Services presented a revised Organisational Change Protocol which had been reviewed as part of a wider policy review. This included consideration of salary protection arrangements currently in place and proposed changes to bring Bracknell Forest more in line with neighbouring authorities.

#### **vi. Reform of Local Government Exit Pay**

The Director: Resources gave an overview on the Government's recent introduction of a cap on Public Sector exit payments, the legislative changes already passed, the subsequent effect on discretionary compensation payments and Local Government Pension scheme regulations. The outcome of the proposals still wasn't clear, but it was hoped that once the current court cases had been heard there would be more certainty.

### **10. Matters to be Raised by Trade Unions**

No issues were raised by the Trade Unions.