

**LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE
8 DECEMBER 2021
4.00 - 4.30 PM**



Present:

Councillors Allen, Angell and Wade

Also Present:

David Allais, UNISON

Lesley Sherwood, UNISON

Pat Kenny, UNISON

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Leake

6. Declarations of Interests

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 July 2021, 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. HR/OD Workforce Update

Paul Young, Head of HR and Contracted Services provided an overview of the revised Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy 2021 – 2024. The previous HR/OD workforce plan had run from 2018 to 2021 and had supported the priority workforce areas of the Council during this period.

Eleven objectives and four themes had been included in the strategy which covered the areas that would be focused on. A Workforce Board had been established which met every 3 weeks which would identify areas that required development, and this would feed into the Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy.

HR Delivery and Transformation were focusing on pay and reward as there were real challenges with retention of staff in certain areas of the council. As a result, job evaluations would be looked at, alongside reward packages that were being used in Bracknell Forest. Management practises across the Council were being looked at, with manager sessions being held which also focused on recruitment and retention.

Health and Wellbeing had been important over the past 18 months, an employee

assistance program was being worked on, and support was being provided across the Council.

A new recruitment platform was being introduced in January 2022, it was hoped that this would provide better data for recruitment and that the right target audiences were reaching vacancies

Values and behaviours were being redefined due to feedback received from staff. These would be used as part of the Bracknell Forest brand and recruitment going forward. Equality and Diversity work was ongoing.

ii. HR Policy Review - Managing Absence and Equality & Dignity at Work

Paul Young reminded the committee that the HR team were undertaking a review of the policies. A schedule had been established to undertake this work resulting in revisions to the Managing Attendance Policy together with a new Equality and Dignity at work policies.

The Managing Attendance Policy has evolved from the previous Sickness Absence Management and ensured that the procedure and sample letters would be now in one place where it had been previously covered in three separate documents.

The Equality and Dignity at Work Policy superseded the Fair Treatment Policy and would support the Council's approach to equalities. At present, there was not a separate policy document on equalities alone as duties had been included in all other HR policies where the responsibilities were clearly defined. This approach would continue but given the profile of the equalities work across the Council it was felt that a clear statement was important.

David Allais commended the team effort in developing the new policies.

iii. Health and Safety Assessment Report

Doug Brady, Health & Safety Manager, provided an update on the COVID-19: Health & Safety Assessment Report.

As a result of COVID 19 and the changes with working arrangements, the report summarised the results of completions of the eLearning packages on Display Screen Equipment, Home Working Assessments, Returning to the Office Assessment and BAME Vulnerable Assessments, which have all been undertaken since January 2021.

The council had a duty of care under the Health and Safety legislation for ensuring the wellbeing of staff. Due to the pandemic, all staff have had to change their working environments and ways of working, therefore, the council are required to update everyone's risk assessments. For those who use computers as part of their work also had to undertake Display Screen Assessments. Home and remote worker needed to update their risk assessments to reflect the increased time working away from the main office and the new requirements for the protection of customer data while in a new working environment,

The recommendations were intended to ensure that the Council has an effective framework for ensuring compliance with best practice in terms of work environment, in the interests of staff wellbeing.

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

No issues were raised by the Trade Unions.

CHAIRMAN

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