

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held at the **New Council Chamber, Town Hall, Reigate** on **Tuesday, 30 January 2024** at **6.30 pm**.

**Present:** Councillors V. H. Lewanski (Chair); M. Tary (Vice-Chair), G. Adamson, R. Biggs and P. Chandler

**Visiting Members present:** Councillor M. Smith

**24 Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence. All Members were in attendance.

**25 Minutes of the last meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the public and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 were approved and signed.

**26 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**27 Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25**

The item was introduced by the Head of Organisational Development and HR. It was explained that the Pay Policy Statement was for recommendation by the Committee to Full Council for approval. Under the transparency requirements in the Localism Act 2011, the Council had to annually publish its approach to pay. The version contained in the agenda pack had incorporated the Committee's feedback and questions that had arisen in conjunction with the development of the budget for 2024/25. The latest workforce and pay data were also included and reflected the position as of 1 January 2024. It was highlighted that the Pay Policy Statement set out the Council's commitment to fair pay for all inclusive of a voluntary commitment to the *Real Living Wage* as determined by the *Real Wage Foundation* which was more than the statutory minimum.

It was noted by the Committee that the gap between the highest and lowest paid had reduced. The Managing Director explained that this reflected Senior Officers having taken a pay freeze for two years and that a set amount pay increase had been applied during 2023/24.

**RESOLVED:** to note Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 and recommend it to Full Council for approval.



**28 Workforce Data Summary (six month update) EC 30 Jan 24**

The item was introduced by the Head of Organisational Development and HR with it being explained that the report provided an update on sickness absence and turnover data at end of Q2 for 2023/24.

The Committee noted the improving trend in data for sickness absence. Congratulations were given to officers for this success. Focus was specifically given to sickness absence due to back pain. The Managing Director explained that this was linked to the number of those in the workforce with active roles. Health & Safety was working to ensure the needs of these staff members were correctly addressed including those who worked from home. The Head of Organisational Development and HR highlighted the need to drill down within the data to identify where absences were happening. Work was taking place with Service Managers to consider interventions with support from Occupational Health. The data would need to be analysed in more detail to understand if there was any correlation between sickness absence and those in more physically demanding jobs. The Strategic Head of Organisation & Transformation informed the Committee that Health & Safety risk assessments were being developed for home working.

*Councillor Adamson joined the meeting.*

**29 Pay Award 2024/25 - verbal update**

The Managing Director provided a verbal update on the Pay Award for 2024/25. Consultation with the Unions (Unison and GMB) had commenced in early autumn 2023. This had been coordinated with the budget setting process. The approach taken to the 2024/25 pay settlement was the same as taken in 2023/24. Rather than applying a specific percentage, a consolidated uplift of £1,800 would be applied across all pay scales from 1 April 2024 and a one off non-consolidated £300 payment had been made in January 2024.

Thanks were given to staff, unions and the senior management for engaging in the process for agreeing the pay award, enabling budget setting to be easier.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update be noted.

**30 Organisational Development Plan 2023 - 2026 - verbal update**

The Head of Organisational Development and HR gave a verbal update. The Committee was reminded that its Terms of Reference provided for it to have oversight and engagement with the relevant officers in the development of the Organisational Development Plan. The Committee had a role as a critical friend to ensure that the plan was on track and fit for purpose. Drafting of the plan had commenced in 2023 with its priorities mapped to the Corporate Plan. These would be updated in line with this being reviewed. Consultation had taken place throughout 2023 including with managers, senior managers, Trade Unions and the Portfolio Holder. The expected outcomes and how it would be known that these had been achieved were being considered. There had been a focus on revising the structure of the Organisational Development & HR Team after which the approach to Organisational Development

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would be considered. A staff survey was anticipated before the end of the current financial year which would form a key part of the draft plan. The Committee would consider the plan once the survey of staff had been completed.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update be noted.

### **31 Recruitment of Deputy CFO - verbal update**

The Managing Director provided a verbal update to the Committee on succession planning for the retirement of the Section 151 Officer in April 2025. The need for a comprehensive handover was being anticipated as the best way to address losing such an important asset to the organisation. Recruitment had therefore commenced in order that it would be possible for the new Deputy Chief Finance Officer to have a year in post before the retirement took place. Candidates had gone through a long and short list process before first stage technical interviews. Senior Management interviews were the next to take place before interview by the Committee on 7 March 2024. The importance of the Employment Law training being provided to the Committee on 31 January 2024 was highlighted.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update be noted.

### **32 Future Work Programme**

It was agreed to confirm whether the March meeting of the Committee would go ahead as soon as possible. If this were to proceed, it was suggested it might be moved to take place on 7 March 2024, in conjunction with the Committee's interviews for the Deputy Chief Finance Office role.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **33 Exempt business**

There was none.

### **34 Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.

The meeting finished at 7.04 pm