

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Thursday, 12 January 2023 at 6.30 pm.**

Present: Councillors ; V. H. Lewanski, J. S. Bray, P. Chandler, T. Schofield and M. Tary

24 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence with all Members of the Committee in attendance.

25 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

26 Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the Minutes (public and exempt) of the meeting held on 3 November 2022 be approved and signed.

27 Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

The report was introduced by the Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources. It was explained that the Committee was required to note and recommend the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 to Council for approval. The statement had been updated since it was considered by the Committee at its last meeting to reflect:

- the comments made by the Committee;
- the figures as from 1 January 2023; and
- the revised Government guidance on Chief Officer severance payments.

Additionally, it was acknowledged that the links to the supplementary information on the Gender Pay Gap and Chief Officer remuneration were to be enabled when this information was published.

The Chief Finance Officer committed to provide Committee Members with a reconciliation of the data contained in the table on the salary budget.

The Committee explored the implications of the Government's new guidance on Chief Officer's severance payments needing to be approved by Council when valued at £100K and above. The Chief Finance Officer highlighted that the guidance from the Department for Levelling UP, Housing and Communities sought to bring greater transparency to such arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 be recommendation to Council for approval.



28 Workforce Data Summary (six-month update)

The report was introduced by the Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources. It was highlighted that a workforce data summary report was provided every six months to the Committee and contained indicators which were part of the performance reporting for HR and Organisational Development.

Comparisons with other authorities were difficult due to the variety of data collection methods employed. However, work was ongoing with it hoped that some form of comparison would be achievable by the end of the financial year.

Sickness was under target. However, it was acknowledged that this did not include Covid reporting. This would be addressed from the start of the new financial year and was likely to result in a significant increase in the sickness reported.

Turnover was reported at 16% against a target of 12% and therefore was red rated. This was as expected due to several factors. Covid had seen staff retain their positions due to uncertainty. Turnover had therefore increased as Covid restrictions were lifted and because of a buoyant employment market. It was expected that turnover would be sustained in the short term but would decline toward the end of 2023 because of the rising cost-of-living and ensuing economic uncertainty. Some movement was reported as due to employees leaving the job market altogether reflecting work/life balance considerations.

In response to questions asked by the Committee, it was confirmed that exit interviews were undertaken. A new reporting system was to be implemented that would allow a breakdown in factors to be provided in the end of year report. The Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources committed to provide a further breakdown of the data in the report to Committee Members following the meeting.

The Committee raised concern about the level of sickness related to cancer/malignancies. The Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources clarified that this was not the case of a few individuals distorting the figures. It was thought that there were no specific reasons explaining the figures. The difficulty and sadness of this situation was acknowledged.

It was reiterated that it was not yet possible to make comparisons with other authorities because of the different ways in which data was captured. However, from informal conversations it was known that the authority was in step with others, with the public sector generically having lower levels of staff turnover compared to the private sector. The fact that there was a limited pool from which to recruit staff meant that ways to share services and skillsets were being explored.

RESOLVED to note the content of the bi-annual Workforce Data Summary six-month update report, comprising sickness, absence and employee turnover until the end of Quarter 2 2022.

29 Future Work Programme

The Committee considered its future work programme.

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RESOLVED that the work programme as presented be accepted and implement for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year with the addition of a further consideration of hybrid working to be taken by the Committee at its meeting in March 2023.

30 Exempt Business

RESOLVED to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for this item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

1. It involved the likely disclosure of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or officer holders, under the authority; and
2. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

31 EXEMPT: Pay Award 2023/24

The Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources provided the Committee with a verbal update on the 2023/24 Pay Award.

RESOLVED to note the verbal update on the Pay Award for 2023/24 provided by the Interim Strategic Head of Corporate Resources.

32 Any Other Urgent Business

There was no other urgent business for the meeting to consider.

The meeting finished at 6.55 pm