

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 16 JULY 2015

Present: Councillor Page (Vice Chair in the Chair);
Councillors Ayub (for Cllr Gavin), Khan (for Cllr Lovelock),
McElligott (for Cllr Terry) and Skeats.

Also Present: J Boyd, R Hall and K Magee (for items 1 to 5), W King,
R Morris, I Wardle and S Poole.

Apologies: Councillors Gavin, Lovelock and Terry.

RESOLVED ITEMS

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Managing Director submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 25 June 2015.

Resolved - That the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting be received.

3. DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - GENERAL UPDATE & BUSINESS DISABILITY FORUM

The Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager submitted a report that updated the Committee on the work that was being undertaken to review and update the Council's policies, procedures and practical support to employees and prospective employees with a disability. This work was being undertaken by a working group led by Roger Morris and with the active support and engagement of members of the JTUC (Joint Trade Union Committee). The group had agreed a series of areas for development and the report outlined the planned work and progress against each area.

The report stated that in addition to the work of the employment group, the Council's recruitment and selection procedures (and related administrative processes) had been amended to ensure that managers, who were recruiting to posts, established at the outset the minimum requirements of the post prior to advertisement. This underpinned the Council's '2 Tick' commitment to ensuring that all candidates with a disability were interviewed if they met the minimum requirements.

Business Disability Forum

The report stated that the Business Disability Forum (BDF) was a not-for-profit member organisation that made it easier and more rewarding to work with and employ disabled people. BDF sought to remove the barriers between employers and disabled people and provided members with pragmatic support by sharing expertise and offering advice and training.

The report explained that BDF had also produced a 'Disability Standard' which provided organisations with examples, based on 10 criteria, of what 'Good' looked

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like across business functions including recruitment and retention, communications and facilities management.

The report outlined the benefits of the Council becoming a member of the BDF, including the opportunity of support to undertake a self-assessment and benchmark the Council's policies and procedures against the Disability Standard as well as the on-line and telephone support available from their Information and Advice Service.

Resolved - That the report be noted and the proposal to become a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF) endorsed.

4. EQUALITY AUDIT 2014/15

The Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager submitted a report that set out a statistical summary of the equal opportunities monitoring under the Council's Equality Monitoring Framework for the financial year 2014/15. The data tables were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the audit was a component of the Council's Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy and would be presented annually, in the form set out in the Equality Monitoring Framework, to provide background data that would assist and inform the work of the Committee as well as providing an equalities context and focus for ongoing discussions with internal and external stakeholders.

The report stated that the framework contained key employment profiles which the Council had to measure by law and also included other profile data based on previous national performance indicators (PIs) outturns where relevant. In addition, data from the report would assist each directorate in setting its own targets based on their clients, customers or service users.

The report explained that the agreed framework reporting heads were:

- All Council Staff by directorate, gender, ethnic origin and disability;
- All Council Staff by gender, ethnic origin and disability across salary bands;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled job applicants;
- Female, BME and disabled applicants as a proportion of their relative cohorts, who progressed to shortlisting to appointment compared with male, white and non-disabled applicants;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees accessing Council training by directorate, training type, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees involved in Council procedures, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Staff turnover data analysed by gender and ethnicity.

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The statistical summary for each of these areas was detailed in Appendix 1 and the report highlighted the following points:

- The proportion of women employed by the Council had remained static at 78.7%, with 92% in schools but only 50.1% in the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services (DENS);
- The proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff had increased from 13.7% to 14.7%, but this was in comparison to a 23% BME economically active population within the Borough;
- The proportion of employees who had declared a disability had increased from 1.8% to 2.6% but this was in comparison to a 6% economically active population within the Borough;
- In 2014/15 there had been 5774 applications for 396 appointments, compared with 4420 applications for 306 appointments in 2013/14. Of the applications in 2014/15, 60% were from women, 27% from BME applicants and 4% from people with a declared disability.

The tables also showed comparisons of gender, ethnicity and disability across salary bands and this indicated that there were at least 55% female employees in all salary bands except for band 1 (which consisted mainly of apprentices). The overall number of employees who had declared a disability was relatively even across most of the bands with the exception of band 10. The level of BME employees in the higher earnings bands had remained static since 2011 and with only 5% in the highest band, which was lower than the proportion of BME employees in the Council as a whole.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

5. AMENDMENTS TO RECRUITMENT AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS GUIDE - POSTS WITH ACCESS TO CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager submitted a report to update the Committee on amendments that had been made to the Recruitment and Pre-Employment Checks Guide - Posts with Access to Children and Vulnerable Adults, to bring it into line with legal requirements and best practice within the Council. A copy of the revised Guide was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the Council's recruitment policy had been updated in 2007 following guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on safer recruitment practices in schools and education settings. The principles contained within that guidance were adopted by the Council for recruitment across the wider range of posts with access to vulnerable groups. The policy had now being revised to address the application of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, and the inclusion of specific handling of references in Children's Services.

The report explained that the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations required that anyone working in a childcare setting was asked to declare if they were disqualified from such work through having an order or other restriction against them in relation to childcare, having committed certain offences, and/or living with another person in

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their household to whom such a disqualification applied ('by association'). It was noted that since these new regulations had been applied, one member of staff had successfully applied for a waiver, five had been redeployed and one had resigned.

The other new procedure that had been added to the policy was that recruiting managers in Children's Services were required to confirm that references supplied for candidates were double checked by directly contacting the referee to ensure they were genuine.

In conclusion the report stated that the updated policy set out a recruitment procedure that met guidance from the DfE to support safer recruitment and would satisfy the expectations of external inspection bodies such as Ofsted.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

7. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES (INCLUDING VOLUNTARY RELEASE SCHEME APPLICATIONS)

The Interim HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out six requests for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy, one request for flexible retirement and one request for retirement on the grounds of efficiency.

Proposals, together with the financial implications were set out in a schedule appended to the report on the following basis:

- Financial cases were given which represented the highest cost to the Council. In most cases this included discretionary added years on pension (where payable), as this represented a direct and ongoing cost to the Council. This was in accordance with the Council's current practice of considering redundancy and retirement terms up to the maximum limit of discretion, where applicable. The Committee was asked to approve individual proposals subject to a maximum ceiling on the exercise of discretion;
- Financial implications were costed on the basis of the estimated figures, which were subject to final confirmation. The figures might be affected by changes to final salary, pensionable service, age or date of leaving. The Committee was asked to approve the proposals on the basis of the estimated figures, subject to any individual proposal being brought back to Committee if the confirmed costs were more than 10% in excess of those reported;

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- The costs of early retirement on the grounds of ill health were met by the Local Government Pension Scheme or the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

The report sought approval for the payment of a compensation package in the case of proposed termination of employment or early retirement on grounds of redundancy, efficiency of the service or ill health subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with employees and their representatives, and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate.

Resolved -

- (1) That the dismissal on grounds of redundancy of employees A, B, C, E, F and H, the early retirement on the grounds of efficiency of employee G, and the flexible retirement of employee D be approved on the terms set out in the schedules appended to the report subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with the employees and their representatives and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate;
- (2) That the proposals set out in (1) and (2) above be approved on the basis of the financial implications set out in the report, and that authority to conclude the proposal be delegated to the Head of Finance, Monitoring Officer and HR and Payroll Services Manager (acting jointly) within that framework, and subject to the maximum ceiling identified for the proposal.
- (3) That the current terms for agreeing compensation packages in specific cases of early retirement or termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency be confirmed.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.02 pm).