

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors Gavin, Page, Skeats and Terry.

Also Present: J Boyd and K Magee (for items 11-18), A Barker (for item 18)
I Wardle, J Hoggart and S Poole.

RESOLVED ITEMS

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Managing Director submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 16 September 2014.

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

13. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The HR/Payroll Services Manager submitted a report updating the Committee on the proposals to promote the Whistleblowing Policy.

The revised policy had been circulated to all staff and managers by email, summarised and promoted in 'Inside Reading' and highlighted to managers. Input on future actions to promote the policy had been sought from a variety of stakeholders, including the Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC) and an automated, dedicated whistleblowing 'hot line' would be set up and managed by Internal Audit.

The report stated that the feedback to date had been sensitive to the need to ensure that all staff and workers (including contractors and agency staff) were aware of the policy and the range of routes available to highlight concerns, including the planned hotline.

Suggested promotional routes for the updated policy included the Employee Handbook, Corporate Induction, the Induction Check-list, a dedicated Whistleblowing web page on the Council's internet site, regular publicity via newsletters and bulletins and the production and circulation of cards and posters to staff, contractors and agency workers which detailed the policy and 'hotline' number.

Resolved - That the Whistleblowing Policy Implementation Plan be approved.

14. CHANGE PROGRAMME - REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Annette Paterson, HR Partner, and Ashley Burton and Tyler O'Sullivan, National Management Trainees (NMTs), submitted a report updating the Committee on the

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

outcomes of two reviews into the management and leadership of change and the support offered to staff affected by change.

A previous report reviewing organisational change programmes had been conducted by HR and presented to this Committee on 3 October 2013 (Minute 12 refers) and a summary of progress on the action plan that arose from this review was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The NMTs and HR had subsequently conducted distinct but complementary investigations and their findings and recommendations were attached to the report at Appendices 2 and 3.

The NMTs had conducted an enquiry, through research, surveys and interviews, into the leadership and management of organisational change in the context of the programme to reshape the Council and their findings and recommendations for improvement had been endorsed by the Reshape Project Board. Their findings stated that the main strengths were communication about the Reshaping programme and communication prior to and during the formal staff consultation, but it was felt that communication following the closure of consultation lacked the clarity, consistency and detail of earlier stages and not all staff felt that their feedback had been seriously considered.

The HR review had also looked at whether the support that was available to staff was sufficient and appropriate and had had ascertained that there was a significant amount of support available to staff, and that there was a high level of awareness of the ability to seek support from the Employee Assistance Programme, but that awareness was low about some of the other support available. As a consequence, HR had consolidated guidance documents into one leaflet and this was attached to the report at Appendix 4. Workshops had been developed and run for managers to provide them with support and to give information about processes and procedures as well as dealing with the emotional aspects of change.

Resolved -

- (1) That the results of the reviews into Management and Support for Staff be noted;
- (2) That the Action Plan for managers leading organisational change projects (attached to the report at Appendix 2) and the Communications Plan (attached to the report at Appendix 3) be approved.

15. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - PROPOSED OVERARCHING THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

Russell Gabbini, Organisational and Workforce Development Manager submitted a report updating the Committee on the proposals for the implementation of an Organisational Development Plan (ODP). The ODP was intended to support the objectives of the Corporate Plan and to embed principles that would achieve a whole systems approach across the Council, as there were currently historical differences in

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

work cultures and practices across the directorates that were not all consistent with the objectives of the Corporate Plan or of the Council. A copy of the plan was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The development of the ODP had been based on a whole systems approach which aimed to set out guiding principles to be followed in carrying out the Council's functions and provided an overarching framework for services to work to, which provided some flexibility to adapt to the changing circumstances.

The draft plan had been developed in consultation with Heads of Service and the JTUC and had been reported to the Local Joint Forum (LJF).

It was proposed that the framework for the ODP be divided into five themes that had been developed to represent the Council's aims and objectives. The themes were:

- Community and stakeholder participation and engagement;
- Learning Organisation;
- Quality, performance and standards;
- Contribution of staff to achieving the Council's aims and objectives;
- Digitalisation.

The first stage would be to identify and develop the actions required to implement the plan with the Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) and would be followed by wider staff participation and engagement to contribute to the final detailed plan, which would be implemented over the following three years.

Resolved - That the themes, objectives and framework for the Organisational Development Plan be approved.

16. REVISED GUIDANCE ON SAFEGUARDING

The HR/Payroll Services Manager submitted a report updating the Committee on the development of further guidance relating to safeguarding vulnerable groups.

Following the decision by this Committee on 17 July 2014 (Minute 7 refers) to end the practice of 3-yearly rechecks of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) records, further work had been undertaken to provide additional guidance for managers and staff to accompany the revised policy. This guidance restated the range of other monitoring and interventions that should be applied to ensure that vulnerable groups were safeguarded and stressed that a re-check could be undertaken should the circumstances justify a further check and that the relevant Head of Service should be involved in such decisions.

The guidance had been produced in consultation with JTUC, Corporate Management Team (CMT) and LJF and a copy was tabled at the meeting. An adapted guide had been prepared for consultation with schools.

Resolved - That the revised guidance on Safeguarding & Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks, August 2014, be approved.

17. DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - GENERAL UPDATE AND PROJECT SEARCH

Roger Morris, HR Partner, submitted a report updating the Committee on the progress of the Disability in Employment Programme. The Committee had previously endorsed a programme to review and update the Council's policies and procedures and practical support to employees and prospective employees with a disability. The work was being undertaken by a working group with the support and engagement of the JTUC and the report outlined progress on agreed work areas.

In addition, the Council's recruitment and selection procedures had been amended to ensure that managers who were recruiting established the minimum requirements of the post prior to advertisement. This would conform to the Council's '2 Tick' commitment by ensuring that all candidates with a disability were interviewed if they met the minimum requirements, as well as ensuring that appropriate consideration was given to redeployees affected by the restructuring of the Council.

The report also outlined the proposal for a partnership between the Council, Project SEARCH, the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust and Reading College to offer students with a learning disability a work placement within the Council.

Project SEARCH was available to students aged 18 and above from Brookfields School and Reading College who were in their last year of education and who had expressed a desire to work. The programme was based at the Royal Berkshire NHS Trust and students were given tailored support, job development and placement opportunities and then further support once they moved into a full time job at the hospital or in another business.

HR had been in discussions with the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Project SEARCH in relation to working in partnership so that the Council offered placements for students and they were also liaising with DMTs to identify possible roles that might be suitable for a Project SEARCH student. As job coaching was essential for students to be taught the role, work culture and work ethics, it would be necessary to either appoint a part time coach or to train an existing member of staff to work alongside Project SEARCH and to support students within the Council.

The Council's Disability Service was also exploring options to provide a supported employment service, to increase the number of people with disabilities (particularly learning disabilities) in paid employment and to support the 'Learning and Working' priority of Reading's Learning Disability Partnership Board. The service would be funded jointly with Reading UK Community Interest Company (CIC) as part of the Reading 'spoke' of the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal.

The report explained that aligning the supported employment service with the wider work in City Deals offered the opportunity to appoint an organisation with experience of providing supported employment to deliver a service to all people with a disability in Reading. It was proposed that this service offered in-work support and so could also provide the job coach required for the Project SEARCH placement.

Resolved -

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

- (1) That the update on the Disability in Employment Programme be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to enter into partnership with Project SEARCH be agreed.

That, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Chair agreed that the following item of business be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency for the following reason:

- Under the arrangements for consultation set out by the former Equal Opportunities Sub-Committee when it set up the nursery in 1987 the Kennet Day Nursery (KDN) Association needed to have ratified the proposed fee increase. Due to extenuating circumstances the original Nursery Users committee date had had to be changed, meaning that the consultation with the full KDN Association had not been fully concluded until 24 September 2014, which was after the deadline date for committee papers for this meeting.

18. KENNET DAY NURSERY FEE INCREASE

Andy Barker, Reading Play Manager, submitted a report that made recommendations for an increase in the fees at Kennet Day Nursery from October 2014.

The report stated that the last fee proposal, for a 5% increase, had been agreed by this Committee on 7 March 2013 (Minute 23 refers) and had required the nursery to be run on a self funding basis with a zero budget build, which necessitated a consistent 85% occupancy level throughout the year. Fees had not been increased in 2013-14, but now required a 2% increase to continue to maintain a zero based budget. The report explained that the average occupancy level had been 87% and that the nursery remained good value for money in comparison to other local nurseries.

Resolved -

- (1) That the fee structure be increased by 2% from October 2014 as follows:
£209.20 per week (Reading Borough Council Users)
£229.50 per week (Other Users);
- (2) That the current supplement of £2 per day for children aged under 2 years and the current discount of £2 per day for siblings, remain unchanged.

19. 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

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

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

The HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out eleven requests for termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy and four requests for early retirement on the grounds of redundancy.

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;
- 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 early retirement on the grounds of redundancy of employees K, L and O, and the termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employees H, I, J, M and N, 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 approval of the early retirement on the grounds of redundancy of employee E and the termination of employment on the grounds of

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES -2 OCTOBER 2014

redundancy of employees A, B, C, F and G, on the terms set out in the schedules appended to the report, along with any others from this service area not included in the agenda papers, 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, be delegated to the HR and Payroll Services Manager in consultation with the Chair of Personnel Committee and the outcome reported to the Committee at the meeting on 11 December 2014;

- (3) 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.
- (4) 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 7.05 pm).