

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 13 JULY 2017

Present:

Councillors David Absolom, Lovelock, Page and Steele
Ms B Reynolds UNISON
Mr K Magee Unite
Mr W King Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager
Mr R Woodford Committee Services

Apologies:

A McNamara National Union of Teachers (NUT)

As the meeting was inquorate on the Union side, it was agreed that each item on the agenda would be discussed and noted by the Local Joint Forum

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Alison McNamara was elected to serve as Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2017/2018, subject to ratification at the next meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Lovelock had been appointed to serve as Vice Chair at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 24 May 2017 (Minute 11 refers).

3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2017

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 2 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report providing the Forum with an overview of Whistleblowing activity over the previous twelve months.

The report explained that at the 17 July 2014 meeting of Personnel Committee (Minute 4 refers) a revised Whistleblowing Policy had been approved which had replaced the earlier version that had been introduced in 2000. The Council was committed to the highest possible standard of openness, honesty and accountability and in line with that commitment, officers were encouraged, if they had serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It had been recognised that certain cases would have to proceed on a confidential basis and to support this a Whistleblowing Policy had been introduced. Since the beginning of 2016 there had been ten recorded cases of Whistleblowing and a table was included in the report that provided an anonymised summary of Whistleblowing Activity.

AGREED: That the overview of Whistleblowing Activity be noted.

5. MATTERS RAISED BY THE UNIONS

(a) Progress with Recruiting Permanent Posts in Place of Interims/Contractors/Locums

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, reported on recent recruitment activity to appoint permanent posts in place of interims/contractors/locums including the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive, and the recent appointment of Director of Adult Care and Health Services. A recruitment exercise was also ongoing to recruit permanent social workers in Children's Services.

Councillor Lovelock also reported on recruitment work in Education, specifically, the work on the appointment to the post of Head of Education and a Business Manager post. In the case of the Head of Education post, interviews and shortlisting would take place during August 2017 and an appointment would be made in early September 2017.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(b) Salary Supplements for Adult Social Care Social Workers

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, reported that officers were investigating the payment of supplements to social workers in Adult Social Care in the light of supplements having been paid to social workers in Children's Services and would be looking at what other authorities were doing. A proposal would then be presented to the new Director of Adult Care and Health Services.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(c) Interim Managers' Awareness of Council Policies and Procedures

Having expressed concern about interim managers' lack of awareness of Council Policies and Procedures, Billie Reynolds, UNISON, reported that at a recent meeting she had been told that officers were working closely with Workforce Development to ensure that the induction process would make sure that all interim managers were made familiar with Policies and Procedures on joining the Council and that a robust programme was being put together to address this issue.

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, agreed that managers needed to be given an overview of Policies and Procedures as part of their induction but should ask HR for a refresh when they needed to apply them in practice.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(d) Income Generation, Identifying Markets and Marketing the Council

Kieran Magee, Unite, acknowledged the work that the Council had done over recent years to generate income and suggested there were further opportunities, both internally and externally. For example, he suggested there were opportunities internally around facilities management to bring more work in-house. In addition, with the large number of housing associations and two universities in the Borough there was also an opportunity to bid for repair work.

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Kieran also presented the Forum with details of a post in Education Services which arranged lectures which were attended by schools. He suggested that this was an example of the type of income generating post/function that should be investigated with the aim of possibly expanding it. He also suggested that, as a principle, managers should consider in-house provision before looking at appointing outside contractors.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That Andy Fitton, Head of Service - Early Help, investigate the opportunity for income generation in Education Services suggested by Kieran Magee and detailed above.

(The meeting opened at 5.05 pm and closed at 5.34 pm).