

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

28 JUNE 2021

PRESENT

Councillor J. Bennett (in the Chair).

Councillors A.M. Whyte (Vice-Chair), D. Acton, C. Boyes, J. Holden, D. Jarman, D.C. O'Sullivan and A.J. Williams.

In attendance

Sara Saleh	Deputy Chief Executive
Angela Beadsworth	Interim Director of Human Resources
Bev Norton	Head of HR Operations
Kate Sturman	Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence
Kyle Maycock	Solicitor
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Longden.

1. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021/22

RESOLVED: That the Membership of the Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year be noted.

2. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2021/22

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year was noted.

3. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None were received.

5. PEOPLE UPDATE APRIL - JUNE 2021

The Interim Director of Human Resources introduced the report with a focus on two key items. The Council had been nominated for Best Change Management Organisation Development Initiative award in the Public Services People Management association (PPMA) for the Council's "EPIC Story" which covered the Council's cultural change journey from its early co-design through to the start of 2021/22 municipal year. The award ceremony was to be held in September and the Committee would be updated on whether the Council were successful following the ceremony. She then updated on the Kick Start programme having

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just done a press photo shoot prior to the meeting and informed the Committee that they would receive regular updates on the progress of placements.

The Head of HR Operations then went over the main points of the report which included levels of sickness absence, the delivery of the elections, and the Council's Health and Wellbeing support for staff. The Committee were informed that the coaching apprenticeship was going well and offered both employee development while increasing 1-1 support to staff members. The resource hub continued to thrive and had recently recruited volunteers to a "Volunteer Army", which would help the Council in the work recovering from the pandemic. The Council's change programmes were continuing to develop at pace, which included the continued integration of Health and Social Care and the redesign of Children's Services.

Following the overview Councillor Acton asked how many staff were in the town hall and whether the levels varied. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that Council buildings were operating at 20% occupancy with a view of increasing to 40% as restrictions lifted. The Council were looking to change the way employees worked with a programme called Trafford Smart Working. Meeting room 9 within Trafford Town Hall was being used as a proof of concept around hybrid working arrangements. Once those trials were completed, they would inform the Council's thinking of how to structure work going forward to ensure the Council built back better from the pandemic, maximising the opportunities of working differently. Councillor Acton asked how the re-opening of Council buildings was progressing and the Interim Director of Human Resources responded that each department was managing their own occupancy levels. While this had led to occasional fluctuations in occupancy it was always within safe manageable levels.

Councillor Acton asked whether HR were confident that the Council would meet their target of having 104 apprenticeships. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that the Council was doing what they could to meet the target but it had been impacted by the pandemic. The target was on the priority list and the Council were confident it would be met.

Councillor Acton asked whether the work to support managers with supporting staff impacted by domestic abuse was having the desired impact. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that a lot of work had been going on around the check in sessions and to encourage managers to have wellbeing discussions with staff to provide them with the opportunity to raise any issues. The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence added that the Council had a Domestic Abuse Policy, which had been in place for many years, and were looking to develop this further through interaction with staff champions.

Councillor Boyes commented about the digital logging in system at Trafford Town Hall and that it was not as good as the track and trace app arrangements at other Council venues. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the electronic logging in system at Trafford Town Hall was new and action would be taken to embed the system with Councillors.

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RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee are to receive updates on the Kick Start Programme.
- 3) That work be done to embed the digital login system at Trafford Town Hall with Councillors.

6. AGENCY SPEND 12 MONTH REPORT 2020/21

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence gave an overview of the report and informed the Committee that the total spend was over £4m. This represented a large increase on the previous year but it had been expected. The Committee were told that additional funds had been provided to deal with some specific Covid related positions. At a previous meeting the Committee had requested to know what proportion of the Council's pay bill agency spend represented and the estimation was that it accounted for roughly 7%.

Following the overview Councillor Acton asked about recruiting Social workers and whether the recruitment campaign was underway. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that HR were supporting Children's Services in designing a recruitment programme to showcase why social workers should choose to work in Trafford..

The Chair asked whether the Council were still struggling with the recruitment of legal professionals. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that the issues were ongoing and the Council were looking at ways to improve recruitment and retention and there were a number of activities in progress. The Chair asked whether any learning from other authorities could be done. The Head of HR Operations responded that the Council would be looking to learn and work collaboratively with other authorities and Trafford would be considering all avenues to address the shortage. The Chair asked whether the Council had considered working with universities that had high numbers of legal graduates. The Head of HR Operations responded that this was something the Council would look at.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7. TRAFFORD'S SMART WORKING APPROACH

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence went over the highlights of the report. The Committee were informed that the Council were utilising responses received from surveys conducted over the last year to understand staff member's views towards different working styles. There had been a number of teams who had embraced agile working since the pandemic and the Council wanted to embed and build on those positive changes.

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence then described the Smart Working proposal, which were designed to offer staff more flexibility in their working life while enabling each service to work effectively. The EPIC Champions were leading on the development of the proposals and a number of information

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sessions had been held for staff, which had received positive feedback. There had been a good level of engagement so far and the feedback received showed that staff members could see the benefits of the new ways of working. The Council were continuing to analyse all the information gathered from the sessions and would look at this information through the lens of equality to ensure that the proposals worked for everyone.

Following the overview of the report Committee Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments but nothing was raised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. CORPORATE DIRECTOR PORTFOLIOS

The Interim Director of Human Resources went through the report which looked at the realignment of roles following the voluntary severance of the Corporate Director for Governance and Community Services. The Committee were informed of the developments that were already underway and how the resignation had enabled the Council to move towards those arrangements. A new post of Head of Legal would be created, which would take on the role of the monitoring officer and be aligned to the Director of Finance. The Committee were asked to note the recommendations of the report.

Following the overview of the report Councillor Boyes asked where the role would be advertised. The Interim Director of Human Resources responded that it would be conducted via a focused legal professional recruitment provider.

RESOLVED: That the report and recommendations be noted.

9. INTERIM LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Deputy Chief Executive explained the reasons behind the need for interim arrangements. The Council had considered a number of options on how to proceed and had decided to proceed with the appointment of the Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources as Deputy Chief Executive effective from 21st June 2021. The Committee were informed of the knock on acting up arrangements for officers from the Strategy and Resources Directorate to enable the Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources to take on the role and responsibilities as Deputy Chief Executive and were asked to approve the recommendations of the report.

Following the summary the Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations of the report and passed on their best wishes to the Chief Executive for a speedy recovery.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the recommendations of the report be agreed.
- 3) That the Committee pass their best wishes to the Chief Executive for a speedy recovery.

10. SALARY AND BENEFITS PACKAGES IN EXCESS OF £100,000

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence introduced the item and explained that the Director of Public Health had reached the threshold due to the further extension of their honorarium to September 2021. It was explained that this was a time limited package and would revert to the substantive salary level once the honorarium came to an end.

Following the summary Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments but none were raised.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee recommend Council approve the salary and benefits package for the Director of Public Health as set out within the report.

11. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Head of HR Operations informed the Committee that during the last quarter there had been 10 applications for exemptions and all 10 had been approved. The applications had come from the following directorates; one from Place, seven from Children's Services, one from Finance, one from Strategy and Resources, and One from Governance and Community Strategy. The Committee were told that a number of the applications related to long Covid and the associated ongoing consequences.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.02 pm