

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2017

PRESENT

Councillors C. Hynes, D. Jarman, J. Bennett and B. Rigby (in the Chair).

In attendance

Deborah Lucas	Interim Director of Human Resources
Rob Smithson	Solicitor
Kirsty Roberts	HR Business Partner
Diane Eaton	Director of Integrated Services, Trafford Council & Pennine Care
Angela Beadsworth	Acting Head of Workforce and Core Strategy
Alexander Murray	Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cawdrey, Mrs. P. Dixon and M. Hyman

19. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. AGENCY SPEND

The Interim Director of Human Resources (IDHR) went through the agency spend report for the second Quarter of 2017/18. The Committee were assured that the Council had a robust vacancy clearance process in place to scrutinise the use of agency workers. The latest quarter had a reduction in the amount of spend on agency workers within CFW but an overall increase from Quarter 1 of £13,000. When compared to the same quarter in 2016/17 the level of spend had reduced by £100,000.

As per the Committee's request at the meeting 11 September 2017 the Director of Integrated Services (DIS), Trafford Council & Pennine Care attended the meeting in order to provide additional detail regarding the level of agency spend within CFW. The DIS explained that the CFW directorate strived to keep the amount of agency spend to a minimum. However, due to the number of statutory responsibilities that the directorate had to fulfil when workers became ill or left the Council those positions had to be filled with immediate effect.

One Committee member mentioned the funding that Manchester City Council had received to hire an additional 60 social workers and asked whether similar funding would be available to Trafford. The DIS responded that those measures were being taken in Manchester to address the issues that were identified in their recent

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CQC inspection. Trafford had received a good rating from the CQC and so would not be receiving additional funding.

The DIS informed the Committee that Trafford were starting to “grow their own” social workers by offering training to assessors so that they could become qualified social workers. Further, Trafford had recently launched the three conversations model and it had received a lot of positive feedback from social workers. One Councillor asked whether the 3 conversations model was only used within Trafford. The DIS responded that the three conversations model was used by roughly 15 local authorities nationwide and that Trafford was now being asked by other councils how to implement the approach. The DIS then offered to attend another Committee meeting in order to explain the 3 conversations model in detail and the Committee accepted the offer.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Director of Integrated Services is to attend another meeting to explain the 3 conversations model in detail.

21. EMPLOYMENT POLICY REVIEW

The IDHR informed the Committee that Human Resources (HR) were going through a programme of modernisation. The three policies that had been sent out with the report were the first for the Committee to consider and agree. The Committee were told that officers had conducted research and benchmarking exercises with other authorities in order to develop the new policies. The managers who use the current policies the most and trade union representatives had worked alongside the HR officers in developing the policies to ensure that they were fit for purpose and easy to understand. The proposed policies were streamlined compared to the current policies and took a consistent approach to setting out timescales with a standardised template being used to design them all. If agreed by the Committee the policies would be implemented in February 2018 and would be preceded by a number of training sessions being run for officers and managers. Both the policies and the planned transition period had already been agreed and welcomed by the trade unions.

The Committee were asked whether they had any questions and one Member enquired about the change made to the right to representation in informal meetings. The IDHR explained that staff members were still able to have representation at informal meetings if they requested it but it removed the necessity of having a union representative attending. Following the IDHR’s response the Committee approved the revised policies and the associated implementation plan.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted by the Committee.
- 2) That the Committee approves the revised policies and the associated implementation plan.

22. WORKFORCE UPDATE

The Interim Director of Human Resources delivered the latest Workforce Update to the Panel. The Panel were told that the level of staff turnover had increased but was still below the national average. The amount of agency spend had decreased most notably within CFW where a number of vacancies had been filled. The levels of sickness within the Council had stayed roughly the same at 10.26 days off per employee per year. The Health and Safety Unit Manager had conducted a piece of work within CFW which had involved working with senior officers and holding a number of feedback sessions with staff members. The employment awards had been well attended and well received by staff. There had been a number of Health and Wellbeing events held since the last meeting including one which was being held at Sale Waterside on that morning.

One Panel member requested that information relating to why people were leaving the Council be brought to a future meeting. The Interim Director of HR informed the Member that whilst it was part of the leaving procedure that exit documentation was completed, this was often not carried out by staff leaving. The importance of this is being promoted with the workforce and it was hoped that more accurate data would be available in a few months' time.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted by the Committee.

23. MANDATORY UNPAID LEAVE

At the last meeting of the Committee the IDHR had brought a report to the Committee with a number of options for mandatory leave in 2018/19. The Committee fed back that they felt the Council should do what it could to protect the lowest paid members of staff from the effects of mandatory leave. Following that feedback the mandatory leave position was that staff members on less than band 3 would be exempt from the mandatory leave. The IDHR informed Committee Members that the consultation with staff was ongoing and would conclude on the 8th January 2018. As of the meeting 30% of staff had signed up to the policy on a voluntary basis and a full report on the outcome of the consultation would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted by the Committee.
- 2) That a report on the outcome of the Consultation be on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.

24. SICKNESS EXEMPTIONS

The IDHR informed the Committee that since the meeting 11 September 2017 there had been two requests for exemptions and both had been granted.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted by the Committee.

25. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Interim Director of Human Resources had accepted a new position and would be leaving the Council. The Committee thanked the Interim Director of Human resources for all the work that she had done for Trafford and across the North West and they wished her all the best in her new role.

The Chairman thanked all those in attendance for their hard work during 2017 and wished them a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and finished at 11.00 am