

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

28 FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT

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

In attendance

Angela Beadsworth	Interim Director of HR
Bev Norton	Head of HR Operations
Kate Sturman	Strategic HR Lead for Policy, Reward, and Intelligence
Tracey Sefton	Strategic Lead for Practice Improvement and Learning
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bennett, C. Boyes and S. Longden

23. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

25. PEOPLE UPDATE

The Interim Director of HR gave an overview of the people update that had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee were informed that the HR team had continued to support teams across the Council as they recovered from the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Health and Safety Team were continuing to work closely with the Public Health and Policy Teams to ensure staff were provided with up-to-date guidance and support. Integration planning for the return to the office was proceeding well with arrangements being put in place to ensure staff felt safe within the workplace. The Council were introducing yellow lanyards for staff who wanted to maintain social distance and the wearing of face coverings inside Council buildings would be optional.

A new desk and room booking system was due to be launched, which would aid staff in the move to a hybrid way of working. It was expected that staff would not be in Council buildings all week and would "touch down" in their designated areas, which had been communicated to staff through detailed floor plans. The Communications team would be sending out key messages to staff over the coming weeks to ensure staff were aware of the new approach to working.

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A #StayEpicThisWinter scheme had been run to support staff in maintain their health and wellbeing and check in on others over the winter period. There had been a number of themes from December to February covering different aspects of health and wellbeing such as physical, mental, or financial wellbeing. The themes were communicated through articles, case studies, and videos provided by the communications team and staff members.

The EPIC Manager programme was going from strength to strength and was in its 18th cohort. The programme helped managers to develop their management skills and adopt more of a coaching approach to leadership. This in turn was encouraging staff to develop and grow as part of Trafford's grow our own strategy, which was one of the key strands of the Council's People Strategy. Ten staff were undertaking a level five coaching apprenticeship and thirty-one had a coaching relationship with a qualifying coach. The Council was also promoting a coaching for managers service, which thirty-one staff members had accessed so far.

The Council were developing a working well passport following feedback from Staff Disability Steering Group. The working well passport was a document which detailed a staff members support needs and adjustments. If their manager changed the passport was passed along so the new manager was aware of the support and arrangements in place, avoiding the need for staff to tell their story multiple times.

The first Kickstarter cohort had graduated and six out of the nine had found ongoing employment within the Council. The other three members had either gained employment outside of the Council or gone into further education. The third cohort had started with ten members who would receive placements across the Council. There were a further six people who had received internships within the Council's library services who would be working across services over the course of the year in partnership with UA92.

Following the overview, the Chair thanked the Interim Director for HR for the detailed report before giving Members the opportunity to ask questions.

Councillor Jarman noted the numbers of applicants to the Kickstarter Scheme had started to decrease and there had been some negative press nationally about the scheme. Councillor Jarman then asked the Interim Director of HR if she had any comments to add about Trafford's experience with the scheme. The Interim Director of HR responded that the Council had struggled to get the same level of applicants for the second but there had been an increase for the third cohort with ten young people ready to start their placements. The Interim Director of HR added that the success of the scheme was down to the work of the employer and Trafford had invested a lot of time and resources to ensure the young people and the Council to get the most out of the scheme.

Councillor Acton asked when the Council would be utilising the Council Chamber for Council Meetings again. The Interim Director of HR responded that a report was being written detailing the next phase of reintegration following the changes to the rules from the 1st of April. The report would include detail how the Council

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would be using all of its building and facilities including the Council Chamber and Committee Rooms.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

26. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Interim Director of HR gave a brief introduction of the report. The Committee were informed that the Pay Policy Statement was a statutory document in accordance with section 38 of the localism act 2011. It was an annual report submitted to the Committee for approval prior to being submitted to full Council, which was scheduled to meet on the 23rd of March 2022.

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence then went through the report and picked out the key highlights. The Committee's attention was drawn to the pay ratios within the report. The ratio for the Chief Executive to the average employee was 6.9 to 1, which was the same as the previous year. The ratio for the lowest paid worker and the average senior manager was 5.55 to 1, which was a reduction from the previous year and would reduce further following the pay award.

The gender pay gap information was based on data from March 2021 and showed an overall mean pay gap of 8.14% with the median being 10.77%. There were several factors for the pay gap including that 76% of the workforce was female and a high proportion of the Council's workforce were in part time rolls. When the data for part time rolls was looked at in isolation the gap was positive for female staff. Another contributing factor was that the council had many in-house services, which were lower paid rolls which traditionally attracted female rather than male workers. Both the mean and median gender pay gap had reduced since the previous year with the median gap having reduced by almost half.

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence concluded the overview by informing the Committee of the next steps and how the data would go on to inform the Councils policies to attempt to narrow the gap further.

Following the overview, the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions, but none were raised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.

27. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME DISCRETIONS POLICY STATEMENT

The Interim Director of HR introduced the report and informed the Committee that while the Local Government Pension Scheme was a statutory pension scheme there was provision within the scheme for local authorities to have discretion in certain areas.

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence then gave a brief overview of the report. The Committee were informed that the Council had reviewed the

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scheme looking at the discretions that had been selected and ensure they were appropriate and affordable. As part of the review the scheme was benchmarked against other local authorities. The Director of Finance had been involved in the review and Trafford had liaised with the Greater Manchester pension fund to ensure that the changes were in keeping with their arrangements and relevant legislation.

The Committee were informed that some of the scenarios covered in the pension scheme would happen in very rare circumstances, but the Council had to have provision in place for if and when they did occur.

After the overview Members were given the opportunity to ask questions but none were raised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations agreed.

28. AGENCY SPEND OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021

The Interim Director introduced the report informing the Committee that there was still a reliance on agency staff in a number of areas across the Council. The Committee were assured that HR were working with departments to increase full time staff recruitment and reduce the reliance on agency staff.

The HR Strategic Resource Lead then provided an overview of the report selecting key information and highlights for the Committee's attention. Overall, the level of spend had increased with the largest area of increase being within children's services. There continued to be a shortage of social workers and the Council were continuing with the strategies the Committee had been informed of at their last meeting. The Council was also working alongside an external recruitment agency to aid in increasing staffing levels.

The Committee were informed of the other strategies the Council were implementing to recruit more staff across all departments. The strategies included a grow our own scheme within adult's services, increasing the profile of the Council through social media, and further utilising the Greater Jobs website.

Following the overview Councillor Jarman asked for clarification around some of the figures within the report. The HR Strategic Resource Lead responded that the figures were accurate and the Councillor had read them correctly. The figures were so low due to the short length of many of the appointments.

Councillor Jarman asked whether all the vacancies were being covered by agency staff. The HR Strategic Resource Lead responded that the majority of them were although a handful remained vacant.

Councillor Williams noted within the report that work was ongoing to understand the resistance to taking a permanent contract with Trafford. The Councillor then asked whether the Council had started to understand that resistance. The HR Strategic Resource Lead responded that the work was ongoing. Permanent positions had been offered to agency offers as part of the recruitment strategy and

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the Council would continue to make Trafford's employment offer more attractive to agency workers.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Head of HR Operations provided the Committee with the quarterly report. In the last quarter there had been eight requests for exemptions and all eight had been approved. Two requests were from Adults Services, five came from Children's Services, and one was from Finance and Systems. Three of the requests were related to long covid with the other being for a range of circumstances.

Following the report, the Committee were given opportunity to ask questions, but none were raised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.10 p.m. and finished at 5.49 p.m.