

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT

Councillor J. Bennett (in the Chair).

Councillors A.M. Whyte (Vice-Chair), D. Acton, S. G. Ennis, M. Freeman, F. Hornby and D.C. O'Sullivan

In attendance

Angela Beadsworth	Interim Director of Human Resources
Adrian Fisher	Director of Growth and Regulatory Services
Bev Norton	Head of HR Operations
Nina Kijowski	Interim Head of Resourcing and Development
Kate Sturman	Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Duncan

12. MINUTES

Councillor Chalkin noted that he had not been listed with in the attendees for the meeting and asked that this be rectified.

RESOLVED: That, following the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.

13. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

14. PEOPLE UPDATE

The Interim Director of Human Resources (HR) introduced the update to the Committee picking out the key highlights for Member's attention. The highlights included the activity of the Health and Safety Team, the Epic manager programme, and the LEAP programme. The Committee were informed of the outcomes of the recent Be Heard Staff Survey which included the Council being accredited as an employer to watch. The key factors for staff members were wanting to progress in their roles, having a good work/life balance, and receiving fair pay for their work. The next steps regarding the survey were for the results to be disseminated across the organisation and utilising the feedback from the survey to come up with actions for the Council to continue to improve as an employer.

Winter planning had already begun with a set of flue and covid vaccination sessions having been arranged at Council venues. Staff were encouraged to stay well over the winter months through the Council's Health and Wellbeing offer. The

Employment Committee 5 September 2022

Council were also looking at what they could do to support staff with the cost-of-living crisis through a financial wellbeing offer.

Following the introduction Council Acton noted the comments made about the Cost-of-Living crisis and making sure that staff were able to access support. The Councillor was aware that the Council only had a small welfare rights team and asked whether the Council could ensure the team were able to cope with the likely demand for the service. In response the Interim Director of HR assured the Committee that the Council would fulfil its responsibility to support staff and residents. The Interim Director of HR stated that the delivery of support was a key focus for the HR team and they would ensure there was sufficient capacity within the welfare rights team to cope over the winter period.

Councillor Chalkin asked about the Microsoft 365 update and whether any pressure was being put on people to get the update completed as soon as possible, as he had attended a session during the day where he was the only person there. The Interim Director of HR responded that the sessions were generally well attended and that Councillor Chalkin's comments would be taken on board. The Committee were assured that the Council were committed to upgrading IT systems to ensure staff had the best tools available to do their jobs.

Councillor Chalkin asked whether more detail could be provided on the reorganisation of the Council's services. The Interim Director of HR responded that the information would be provided to Committee Members after the meeting.

Councillor Chalkin asked whether the Council provided any support for staff around tackling climate change and green initiatives. The Interim Director of HR responded that there were active travel groups and other initiatives the details of which would be shared with the Committee via email.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That details of the reorganisation of Council services be shared with the Committee.
- 3) That the details of the support for staff to tackle climate change be shared with the Committee.

15. AGENCY SPEND Q1

The Interim Director of HR introduced the report and informed the Committee that all the spend was covered within existing departmental budgets. The level of spend on agency staff in Quarter 1 of 2022 was the highest quarter 1 spend seen in recent years. The Interim Director of HR spoke of the commitment to "growing our own" staff through offers of qualification opportunities and by recruiting many apprentices. The Interim Director of HR informed the Committee of the success of the social work training initiative which was in its fourth cohort.

The Interim Director of HR through the range of work being done to address the shortage of social workers. Discussions were being held among service leaders

**Employment Committee
5 September 2022**

across Greater Manchester to reach a consensus on the levels of pay across the conurbation. Momentum was building regionally and nationally with pressure to introduce national pay levels across the country. Work was ongoing within schools to encourage young people to consider a career in social care with some schools already offering health and social care as a GCSE within the borough.

The Council were taking part in an apprenticeship pilot and already had two new starters and the Interim Director of HR stated that the Committee would receive updates on the pilot scheme as it progressed. The Council's learning partners had begun the second phase of their training plan and the council had subscribed to a company called research and practice and staff could access all the resources they provided. The Interim Director of HR concluded the introduction by assuring the Committee that all efforts were being made to reduce the level of agency spend and asking the committee to note that consultancy spend had reduced during quarter 1.

Following the introduction Councillor Hornby asked whether there had been any progress on having a Greater Manchester pool of social workers. The Interim Director of HR responded that the GM pool of social workers was being considered as part of the wider conversations around social worker pay.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

16. CADET LEADERS LEAVE POLICY

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence introduced the report to the Committee. The Committee were informed of the excellent relationship between the Council and the armed forces with the Council having been awarded the gold standard. As part of the reapplication for the gold standard the Council were looking to increase the scope of the policy to offer up to 10 days of special leave for staff who were cadet leaders.

Following the introduction, the Chair welcomed the report and its recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee Support the provision of 10 days of special leave for staff who are cadet leaders.

17. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Head of HR Operations informed the Committee that in quarter 2, which covered April to the end of June, seven exception requests had been received and all had been approved. Two had been received from Adult Services, four had been received from Children's Services, and one had been received from Strategy and Resources. There had been a reduction in the amount of time requested off. Previously requests had been for an average of around three months which had reduced to an average of one month.

**Employment Committee
5 September 2022**

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

18. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

The Chair allowed consideration of the following matter as an item of urgent business to enable the Director of Growth and Regulatory Services to begin recruitment to meet the Council's staffing needs.

The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services introduced the item of urgent business which included market supplements for some members of the building management team. It was explained to the Committee how the team operated and how the Council were in competition with private business for some activities, but the Council had several statutory requirements that the private sector did not have to do. Over the years this had led to specialisation in the private sector in the more profitable areas which has led to higher wages being offered than in local authorities.

The Committee were informed that the new buildings regulation act was due to come into force and it would place new obligations on the Council. This would require more work from the team and additional process for staff that staff would need to complete to prove they had a sufficient level of competence to undertake their role. In order to retain Council staff the service needed to address the new requirements. The Committee were told that the changes also offered an opportunity for the Council to bring in funding increase recruitment and capacity, which would further increase income. The report recommended that a market supplement be awarded to staff to bring the level in line with other local authorities and to be comparative with the private sector.

Councillor Freeman spoke in support of the paper and its recommendations due to the importance of the work the team did. Councillor Acton agreed with Councillor Freeman about the importance of building control, especially following on from the Grenfell tower tragedy and asked whether the funding the Director of Growth and Regulatory Services spoke of was likely to come through. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services responded that it would be a reliable stream of income for the Council.

Councillor Chalkin asked where Trafford was situated compared to other local authorities across Greater Manchester in terms of pay. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services responded that Trafford were currently paying lower than the Greater Manchester average, which was an issue when looking to recruit new staff.

Councillor Chalkin asked if it was likely that the Director of Growth and Regulatory Services would be back in three months' time asking for more. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services responded that he thought it was unlikely, but he could not say for certain. The Director of Growth and Regulatory Services then spoke about the plans to train more staff with the view that all local authorities would be looking to increase recruitment to manage the increased workload and to

**Employment Committee
5 September 2022**

take advantage of the opportunity increase income once the building regulation act was implemented.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Market Supplements in paragraph 4.1 of the report and rationale for payment be approved.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 p.m. and finished at 5.41 p.m.