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EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2016

PRESENT

Councillor B. Rigby (in the Chair).

Councillors Mrs. P. Dixon (Vice-Chairman), M. Cawdrey, N. Evans, C. Hynes and D. Jarman.

In attendance

Lisa Hooley

Director of Human Resources

Mark Jones

Interim Head of Legal Services

Ian Cockill

Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bennett.

7. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. AGENCY SPEND FOR Q1 - PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2016

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report detailing the use and cost of agency workers across the Council for quarter 1 of 2016/17.

Questions were raised about the staff renewal rate for peripatetic children's social work and the continued comparative high spend in the Transformation and Resources Directorate.

The Director of Human Resources explained that the complexity of peripatetic case work was a factor, however, a high turnover of staff was not expected with the establishment of a new team.

The Committee was also advised that the trend for agency spend in Transformation and Resources was downwards and was expected to continue in the same direction as services were transformed and recruitment took place.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Director of Human Resources reported orally that 4 exemption requests had been submitted during the last quarter with all 4 being agreed.

The Committee was informed that since the revised policy was introduced in April 2014, there had been a total of 19 requests, 14 of which had been agreed and 5 declined. Interest was expressed regarding the cost that this equated to.

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The Committee discussed the merits of the existing discretionary arrangements compared to a fixed written policy. Noting that, under previous policies the element of discretion had always applied to exceptional circumstances, the Committee was also not aware of any issues being raised by employees and trade unions concerning existing procedures.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the quarterly report be noted.
- (2) That a review of the policy be conducted at the end of the current Municipal Year.
- (3) That Members be provided with the cost of the 14 agreed exemptions since April 2014.

10. SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report detailing a succession planning strategy which had been developed to address strategic risks regarding loss and/or absence of senior management capacity and which sought to introduce a number of measures to mitigate those risks.

Discussing the strategy and in particular the identification of potential successors, concerns were expressed about compliance with equal opportunities. The Interim Head of Legal Services assured the Committee that such a process was not contrary to legislation.

The Director of Human Resources also advised that as part of the process selection would be monitored to ensure that all staff would have the opportunity to be recognised and demonstrate their potential. Self-nomination was suggested for development within the strategy.

With regard to the possibility of being insular, although initial opportunities would be ring-fenced internally, posts would be taken to the external market should no suitable candidate be identified. Assessment as vacancies arose and the use of appropriate selection panels would be part of the process.

RESOLVED: That the approach to succession planning detailed in the report be approved and that the comments of the Committee be considered as the strategy is developed.

11. UPDATE ON THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY AND TARGET

The Director of Human Resources provided an oral update on the Apprenticeship Levy, a new Government initiative that would be implemented from May 2017.

The Government had released details of its proposals which would apply to all large organisations with an annual payroll of over £3 million and would be payable by employers the rate of 0.5% of the payroll. Employers would receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against the Levy payment and would also 'top up'

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the funds by 10%. Additionally, public sector organisations would be set a target that 2.3% of their workforce must be apprentices, which equated to 123 full time equivalents for Trafford.

Employers in England that pay the Apprenticeship Levy and provide Apprenticeships would be able to allocate their Levy contributions as digital vouchers to use to train their Apprentices. There would be incentives for employers that recruit 16-18 year olds and care leavers aged 19-24.

Consultation on the proposals ended that day with a refined scheme expected October 2016. Guidance from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs was also expected December 2016.

The implications of this initiative continued to be considered by the Council and across Greater Manchester authorities were looking to share their learning. Responding to a concern, the Director of Human Resources reassured the Committee that it was not meant to replace existing staff and that the Council would be looking to develop the strategy it put in place when launching its apprenticeship scheme in 2011, which aimed to develop career paths and provide additional opportunities.

RESOLVED: That the oral update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.21 a.m. and finished at 11.29 a.m.

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