

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

25 MARCH 2019

PRESENT

Councillor J. Bennett (in the Chair), J. Slater (Vice-Chair), D. Acton, M. Hyman, B. Rigby and G. Whitham.

In attendance

Sara Saleh	Corporate Director of People
Angela Beadsworth	Head of Workforce and Core Strategy
Beverley Norton	Head of HR Business Partner
Alexander Murray	Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cawdrey. M. Cawdrey

29. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 December 2018 and 11 March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

31. UNSOCIAL HOURS ALLOWANCE

The Committee were informed that there were small changes proposed to the wording of the policy for on call payments and out of hours allowances in response to a situation arising in Supported Living Service who provide accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities.

A review of the service previously highlighted the need for flexibility in how staff were remunerated for working outside of core hours.

The changes proposed were in two parts, one was to introduce an on call payment at a sessional rate of £25.00 for Supported Living Service staff for being on call for the hours 8am-8pm.

The second part of the proposal was to remunerate those workers who worked additional shifts as overtime and to equalise payments made to those workers who work on a day shift and those who work nights.

The proposal for change was agreed with the trade unions, the service and employees, and it allows the service to work in a much more flexible way. Night workers who work through the night and work an additional shift on the daytime will get an allowance of 10% in the new proposal.

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Following the presentation of the report the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. One member asked whether the increase was being done elsewhere as they were concerned that it could make the councils services uncompetitive and potentially lose staff. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy responded that is a solution for this point in time and in speaking to the Head of Service and Trade Unions there were no indications of any employees who were not in favour of the proposal and would choose to leave the service and seek employment elsewhere. A review of allowances is in the HR Work Programme for 2019/20 and the larger in depth review will involve benchmarking with GM to ensure that Trafford remains competitive and an attractive employment proposition.

The Vice Chair of the Committee asked what level of consultation had been conducted with the Trade Unions. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy answered that the Union representatives had been consulted and had reached an agreement with the Council. The Vice Chair asked whether there had been a ballot carried out by the Trade Union and whether the effected staff had been consulted directly to ensure that they understood what the changes meant for them as it represented a fundamental change in their contracts.

The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy responded by saying that the allowances structure in place from the harmonisation of terms and conditions review in 2010/11 would have a collective agreement in place and that this proposal was a small change to the policy to accommodate the Supported Living Service.

Consultation took place with TU representatives who were involved in co-designing the solution to resolve some of the immediate remuneration issues.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agree with the recommendations of the report with the understanding that sufficient consultation had been conducted.

32. FOSTERING LEAVE POLICY

The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy presented the report to the Committee.

The Committee were told that Trafford already has a range of family friendly policies in place to support our staff who are also foster carers and that helps us to meet our corporate parenting responsibilities. Fostering is one of the key mechanisms for the Council to improve outcomes for our looked after children and the enhancement of the policy we had looked at what other Councils had done and what good practice looked like. We found that 5 days additional leave to undertake their foster care duties during and throughout the assessment period with the option of asking extra leave if needed was exemplar. The Council were looking to implement the policy on the 1st April and send out a communication supporting the policy on the same day.

By enhancing this policy it supports our ambition to look after our children in care, further support staff who foster, increase awareness of fostering and help us to be an Employer of Choice as a fostering friendly role modelling good practice.

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The Committee supported the policy but one Member was surprised that the allowance was not more than 5 days given that the Council are the Corporate Parents and have a responsibility to provide the best care for the children in the borough.

The Committee would like to know the number of employees who were foster carers and whether the policy had an impact and whether other Councils do better in this respect. The Chair raised the possible issue of if staff were asking for extra days that there could be inconsistency between different departments. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy thanked the Councillors for their comments and assured them that their points would be taken into consideration when implementing the policy.

The Committee requested that they receive regular updates on the implementation of the policy and the impact that it had on foster caring staff.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Committee support the changes to the Fostering Leave Policy.
- 2) That the Committee request regular updates on the progress of the implementation of the policy and its impact upon staff who are foster carers.

33. AGENCY SPEND

As the report had been circulated in advance with the agenda the Corporate Director of People went over the key points. The Committee were told that the report covers quarter 3 and in that period a reduction in spend was seen compared to the previous period. The Corporate Director then went through the agency spend of each directorate before asking the Committee for questions.

All vacancies are subject to a robust clearance process and a summary of each Directorate was provided.

The Trafford Academy was mentioned in relation to spend in Adults Services as an initiative that will help us to grow a talent pipeline and help reduce agency reliance.

The Vice Chair stated that she was in full support of the work that the Council had done with Trafford Academy and was a really positive initiative and asked that more detail about this work be brought to a later meeting. Another Committee Member stated that they were pleased that agency spend had decreased and seconded the Vice Chair's request for more detail about the work with Trafford Academy. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy responded that a presentation on the work with Trafford Academy could be on the agenda for the next meeting and would look to request that the strategic lead of the project attends.

The Chair drew the Committees attention to point 2.1.7 of the report, which stated that resources had been realigned following the recent Ofsted inspection to ensure

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that caseloads were manageable, and requested that more detail on this be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a presentation on the Council's work with Trafford Academy be delivered at the next meeting.
- 3) That additional information about the realigning of resources following the recent Ofsted report be brought to the Committee's next meeting.

34. WORKFORCE UPDATE

The Corporate Director of People went through the highlights of the workforce update and the trend analysis and requested comments on the report.

The Vice-Chair asked about the length of time that acting up situations were in place and the Corporate Director responded by saying that it can vary but that robust monitoring arrangements were in place to ensure that any long term arrangements are picked up.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

35. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Corporate Director of People informed the Committee that in the last quarter two exemptions had been applied for, to extend for three months in both cases, and were agreed.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and finished at 5.30 pm