

MINUTES OF MEETING Staffing and Remuneration Committee HELD ON Monday, 18th October, 2021, 7.40 - 8.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dhiren Basu (Chair), Gideon Bull (Vice-Chair), Charles Adje, Julie Davies and Paul Dennison

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)

There were no apologies for absence.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Adje advised that he was the Branch Secretary for a Trade Union.

5. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS

None

6. MINUTES

In relation to the previous minutes, officers advised that the Workforce Development Strategy had been uploaded to the intranet and that the equalities comments requested had been circulated to the committee Members.

In response to a question, officers advised that there was no consultant strategy but that there was a wider policy on engaging agency workers, which included consultants. All salaries within the organisation that were over £100k were published on the Council's website.

Cllr Davies advised that most of the concerns outlined by members around consultants were covered through the recruitment policy and that if that policy was correctly followed there wouldn't be more than a few consultants working for the Council at any one time.

It was suggested that the key focus should be on outcomes rather than just the number of consultants employed.

It was also suggested that there should be a clear justification for using a consultant rather than full time members of staff and that this should be time limited.

In response to a question around whether she was happy with the level of consultant usage, the Cabinet Member elaborated that the recruitment policy clearly set out that there had to be a justification and that departments were strongly encouraged to hire their own staff. The employment of any consultant required a business case. Cllr Davies commented that she was concerned about the recent history of over-reliance on consultants within the organisation but that it was also important to recognise the distinction between consultants and interim staff.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

7. HR CHANGE MANAGEMENT POLICY - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report which provided the Staffing & Remuneration Committee with an update regarding the on-going review and revision of the Restructuring, Redeployment and Redundancy Policies. The report was introduced by Dan Paul, Chief People Officer as set out in the agenda pack at pages 7-10. The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. Officers agreed to bring back an update on the Change Management Policy to the next meeting. **(Action: Dan Paul).**
- b. In response to a question, the Committee were advised that the new policy would allow someone at risk of redundancy to be given a redeployment position one grade higher or one grade below their substantive grade however, unlike the existing policy, if they rejected that offer, they would not be automatically entitled to voluntary redundancy, rather they would be re-deployed into that role. It was anticipated that this would reduce the level of redundancy costs to the organisation.
- c. The Cabinet Member welcomed the pay retention period for those redeployed in a grade lower than their substantive one. Officers set out that this protected the employees pay at their substantive grade for a period of 12 months if they were redeployed to a grade one below that substantive grade.
- d. In relation to concerns about making employees redundant just before they turned 55 so that they could not claim their pension allowance early, officers confirmed that employees were entitled to claim their pension if made redundant at 55. Officers advised that although this was a concern they had heard before, there was no absolutely evidence that the organisation had ever done it.
- e. In response to a question, officers acknowledged that the policy timescales were a challenge.
- f. In response to comments from the Committee, the Cabinet Member advised that managers undertaking restructures had to have the required paperwork to do so and any restructure would be assessed in terms of how much it cost to implement.

- g. In response to a question, officers advised that the average number of spinal points on a particular grade was three.
- h. In response to a question, officers acknowledged that an eight week trial period could be seen as quite a long period in some circumstances but that this was still being negotiated with the trade unions.

RESOLVED

That the Staffing and Remuneration Committee noted the progress with this policy review.

8. APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

The Committee received a report which provided the Staffing & Remuneration Committee with an update regarding the Council's approach to apprenticeship training opportunities for all levels of employees both existing and newly recruited staff. The report was introduced by Dan Paul, Chief People Officer as set out in the agenda pack at pages 11-20. The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. Since April 2017, employers with a pay bill in excess of £3m are subject to a national apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of their pay bill. Public sector bodies, with more than 250 staff, have also been set a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts. It was noted that Haringey's levy is c. £896k per year. This represents £74k per month which Haringey was accessing to provide apprenticeship training opportunities existing and incoming employees. The current levy fund available to spend is £1.8m (covering two c.£900k payments over a two year period).
- b. The Committee welcomed the Council's progress in this area. Clarification was sought around whether the government could try to reclaim the £1.8m allocated to Haringey. In response, officers advised that any unused funding allocation would return to the government after two years, so Haringey effectively needed to spend £74k a month on apprenticeship training opportunities to prevent the government reclaiming some funding.
- c. The Committee sought clarification as to whether the Council had utilised the ability to transfer up to 25% of the funding to SMEs for their apprenticeship training schemes, officer agreed to come back to Committee with a written answer on this point. **(Action: Dan Paul)**.
- d. Members welcomed proposals for Haringey apprenticeships to be allocated to existing staffing positions so that jobs were available at the end of the apprenticeship and noted the contrast with boroughs such as Hackney, who had spent all of their funding allocation but did not have jobs available at the end of their scheme.
- e. In relation to a question around whether specific areas have been identified that it would be better suited to apprenticeships, officers confirmed that work had been done to identify apprenticeship opportunities across different business units and Customers and Transformation currently had the most apprentices at present. Officers also advised that some testing of the internal market for outside apprenticeships had been undertaken, with HR agreeing to fund one year's salary for an outside apprenticeship. Some applications had been received for this.

- f. In response to a question, officers advised that they had not undertaken any formal benchmarking with other boroughs as it was difficult to do but members were advised that officers were happy with the amount of resources that were being invested in this area.
- g. Officers acknowledged that they were working to reduce agency spend and increase the number of apprentices but that this was a long term area of work.
- h. In relation to a question around career development qualifications, officers advised that there were a range of different providers for these including universities, as this was not a one-size-fits-all approach. It was noted that there were procurement processes in place to achieve the best outcomes for the Council in relation to career development qualifications.

RESOLVED

That the report, information and the next steps in order to increase the number of apprentices at the Council was noted. There was a three pronged approach:

- I. Recruit to apprenticeships by default
- II. Career Development Qualifications (CDQ)
- III. Apprenticeship Development Schemes

9. PEOPLE REPORT - JUNE 2021

The Committee received a standing item report which provided an update on relevant workforce data. The report was introduced by Karen Gooday, Head of Employment, Reward & Transformation as set out in the agenda pack at pages 21-27. The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee noted that there had been a reduction in agency staff for this report, part of this related to a reduction of agency staff employed at Covid testing sites.
- b. Officers highlighted that the report set out that the current number of consultants employed by the Council was seven.
- c. Sickness levels were continuing to be monitored closely and Covid sickness levels had gone down during this period.
- d. In response to a request from the Committee, information on apprenticeship numbers had been added to the report at paragraph 6.1.6 of the report.
- e. The Committee commented on the number of leavers under the age of 40 increasing from 88 to 113 and questioned whether this related to staff working at Covid testing sites. Officers advised that a piece of work was being done with the young people's network which would include looking into this issue in more detail.
- f. The Committee commented that the annualised cost of consultants was close to a million pounds. The Committee also requested that information be provided on the longevity of consultant positions, as the key area of concern was around consultants being in post for a long period instead of employing full time staff. **(Action: Karen Gooday)**.
- g. The Committee requested further information for the underlying agency figures so that members could get a better idea of the patterns of changes in the services set out in paragraph 6.1.3. In response, officers advised that the new system would afford greater transparency going forwards and would allow HR

to provide greater detail on agency staff and patterns in the future. **(Action: Karen Gooday).**

RESOLVED

Noted

10. EMPLOYEE PULSE SURVEY - DISCUSSION PAPER

The Committee received a presentation which provided feedback on the employee Pulse survey in relation to staff wellbeing. The presentation was introduced by Dan Paul as set out in the agenda pack at pages 27-40. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee noted that the survey received 900 respondents, which equated to 45% of staff. 40% of staff said that their wellbeing had improved and 21% said their wellbeing had decreased.
- b. The Committee noted with concern responses which said that employees were confident to speak to their manager openly and honestly. In response, officers acknowledged that this was a concern to management and advised the Chief Executive was exploring this issue further with her senior management team.
- c. The Committee sought clarification on how the Council could assist those staff who were not confident in using public transport to get to work. In response, officers advised that there was parking available at the Civic for those that drove but it was acknowledged that there was a limit to what the Council could do to support those without a car. The Council could not provide taxis for everyone, for example.
- d. The Committee suggested that the organisation should offer flexible working arrangements to staff. The Committee also suggested that the focus on requiring staff to come into the office should be around team building requirements. It was commented that there should be some determination based on what staff had to come in to the office for, that they couldn't do at home.
- e. Cllr Davies advised that she was particularly encouraged by the new staff wellbeing strategy, which had been externally assessed by the GLA as being excellent.
- f. The Committee welcomed the surveying of staff but queried whether any surveys of management had also been done to establish whether teams were able to do what they did before whilst working with a different operating model. Officers acknowledged the need to achieve a balance between the needs of the organisation, the needs of individual teams and the needs of residents.
- g. The Committee also emphasised the need for a collaborative culture across the organisation in order for a hybrid way of working to flourish. In response, officers advised that some of the points raised during the discussion were quite high level big picture items and that these were being looked at a senior level. Officers acknowledged the need for collaborative working and advised that the refit of Alex House was being undertaken with collaborative working spaces in mind.
- h. The Committee was advised that the Council had a tax-free purchase scheme for bikes for staff and that staff could also borrow a bike in order to trial using it regularly.

- i. Cllr Davies commented that she was speaking to officers about exploring the feasibility of the staff being given subsidised or free access to leisure facilities at New River, as part of the process of bringing the facility back in-house.

RESOLVED
Noted

11. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

CHAIR: Councillor Dhiren Basu

Signed by Chair

Date