

ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2017

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ORGANISATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2017

Present:

Councillor D Skinner Chair
Councillor T Mansbridge Vice-Chair
Councillor J Barry
Councillor B Ridgway

Also Present

Steph Barker – Assistant Director – HR & Payroll (Min No 124, 125 & 126)
Clare Ashton – HR Business Partner (Organisational Development) (Min No 124)
Sue Veerman – Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Sarah Cottam – Senior Governance Officer (Acting)

121 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A Dale, L Robinson, R Welton and B Wright.

122 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at this meeting.

123 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee held on 14 June 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

124 Apprenticeships

The Committee considered a presentation on the Apprenticeships Scheme and discussed the progress of the scheme so far. Steph Barker, Assistant Director – Human Resources & Payroll and Clare Ashton, Human Resources Business Partner (Organisational Development) were in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions from the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the new Apprenticeship Levy came into place in April 2017 to support the Government's plan to increase apprenticeship starts to 3 million by 2020. An apprenticeship target was set for public sector bodies to have 2.3% of its workforce comprised of apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Levy would be a levy on UK employers to fund new apprenticeships. The levy would be 0.5% of the pay bill through the PAYE. Any UK employer in any sector with a payroll of more than £3m a year was liable to pay the levy. It was advised that the money paid to the levy was put into a digital account by the Government which was to be used for apprenticeship training. At North East Derbyshire the head count was 479 employees, this equated to an annual target of 11 apprenticeship starts per year. The approximate cost of the levy to the Council was £36,961 but this was further topped up by 10% from Central Government which equated to approximately £3,696 giving the Council an approximate total of £40,657 to spend on apprenticeship training. The Committee were advised that HR had held managers' briefings with all managers throughout the Council requesting them to start thinking about which vacancies within their departments could be advertised as apprenticeships and which current posts could also access for the funding for further training needs. To date, various departments had signed up to the apprenticeship scheme which were:-

- ICT (Joint Post) X 1;
- Environmental health (Business Admin) X 2;
- Leisure X 1;
- Customer Services X 1.

The Committee were advised that interest in the Apprenticeship Schemes has been shown by other departments such as Finance, Streetscene, Partnerships, Estates and Communications and the Human Resources Business Partner (Organisational Development) felt confident that the target would be achieved this year.

Discussion also took place on the benefit of an Apprenticeship Charter.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee notes the presentation and progress of the Apprenticeship Scheme.
- (2) That consideration be given to the introduction of an Apprenticeship Charter which Scrutiny would like to consider.

The Human Resources Business Partner (Organisational Development) left the meeting at this point.

(Assistant Director – HR & Payroll/
HR Business Partner (Organisational Development)

125 Sickness

The Committee considered additional analysis in relation to sickness absence within the Council for the 2016/17 financial year. The Assistant

Director – HR and Payroll advised that the outturn figure for the reporting period was 11.35 days per employee. This was a slight reduction on the previous year but it was significantly higher than the Council's target of 8.5 days per employee.

Whilst the outturn figure reported 11.35 days per employee there was obviously employees who did not have any sickness absence. To put this into context, whilst 63% of employees had had some sickness absence, 37% of employees had had no sickness absence.

The outturn figure equated to 4090.49 days lost to sickness absence.

Of the days lost to sickness absence, 1621.09 were attributed to short term absence. This was significantly less than the previous year where 2484.90 days were attributed to short term absence.

Long term illnesses were those absences that lasted four weeks or more. For this past financial year 2469.40 days were attributed to long term absence which was significantly higher than the 1798.70 long term absence days in 2015/16.

The Council had managed 49 long term cases in the last financial year and of these there were 28 male employees and 21 female employees absent with long term illnesses. The service area with the highest level of long term sickness absence was Streetscene with 23 employees, followed by Environmental Health with 8 employees and the third highest was leisure with 5 employees. The Committee was advised that this was expected as these were the three of the largest sectors within the Council.

In terms of job roles 20 employees on long term sickness absence occupied what was traditionally referred to as manual or craft occupations, 25 were office based employees and 4 employees occupied leisure roles. The Committee were advised that of the long term cases, 39 employees were classed as full time and 10 were part time. The highest number of long term absences occurred in salary band grade 4 – 6, and the highest age category for long term sickness absence was in the 50+ age range. It was advised that the two top reasons for long term sickness absence were stress and depression – 20 cases and Surgeries – 8 cases. There was one termination of employment on the grounds of sickness capability, one ill-health retirement and one death in service during the last financial year.

Members requested that the figures provided in the report be shown in percentages for ease of understanding. The Assistant Director – HR and Payroll advised that the percentages were shown on the full outturn report and was also broken down into individual departments. This would be provided to the Committee via the Overview and Scrutiny Manager.

The Assistant Director – HR and Payroll advised the Committee that sessions were being offered to staff to assist in health and wellbeing and morale. The sessions offered were Yoga Classes, Personal Resilience and Mindfulness and Sleep Workshops.

Members found this pleasing to hear that sessions were being offered to assist staff in reducing sickness absence.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Assistant Director – HR and Payroll provides the full sickness absence outturn report including percentages to the Committee via the Overview and Scrutiny Manager.
- (2) That the Committee notes the update and continues to monitor sickness absence figures in the Council, including joint officers.
(Assistant Director – HR & Payroll/
Overview and Scrutiny Manager)

126 Scrutiny Review – Job Evaluation and Associated Benefits

The Committee discussed the proposals to review the job evaluation process within the Council and the associated benefits.

The Committee considered the Council’s current position and this was discussed at length with the Assistant Director – HR and Payroll. It was advised that the Council would be looking at harmonising pay and grading over the Strategic Alliance.

The Job Evaluation Scheme being used by the Council currently needed to be reviewed to take account of the changing environment. It was important to ensure staff were paid correctly and fairly and also to make staff aware of the process and its purpose.

There was currently issues of recruiting to particular posts within the middle grading of the pay structure and the Assistant Director – HR and Payroll advised that the National Pay Structure was currently being reviewed, but would not be ready until 2019.

The Committee wished to look at and scrutinise any job evaluation options put forward by Human Resources. It was requested that the Assistant Director – HR and Payroll feed in the proposals to the Committee. The Organisation Scrutiny Committee would look at and discuss a preferred option and report back its findings to Cabinet.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Assistant Director – HR & Payroll for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Organisation Scrutiny Committee look at and scrutinise any job evaluation options put forward by Human Resources to ensure staff are being paid correctly and that jobs were being evaluated fairly.
- (2) That the Assistant Director – HR and Payroll feed in proposals to the Organisation Scrutiny Committee on job evaluation to allow members of

the Committee to discuss a preferred option and feedback where necessary.

(Members/Assistant Director – HR & Payroll)

127 List of Key Decisions – Issue No 62

The Committee considered Issue No 62 of the List of Key Decisions which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions Issue No 62 be noted.

128 Work Programme

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2017/18 which set out the items which the Committee wished to consider over the forthcoming year.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Committee that the Work Programme would be reworked slightly and would include extra meetings when needed to carry out the Scrutiny Review.

(Overview & Scrutiny Manager)

129 Additional Urgent Items

There were no additional urgent items to be considered at this meeting.

130 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Organisation Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 3.00 pm.
