

**Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th April, 2017.**

**Present:-** Councillors N Holledge (Vice-Chair, in the chair), Bedi (from 6.40pm), Brooker, Davis, M Holledge and Sharif

**Also present under Rule 30:-** None.

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillors Usmani and R Sandhu

**PART 1**

**31. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**32. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th January 2017**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be approved as a correct record.

**33. Temporary Agency Staff - Progress on Implementation and Baseline Monitoring Report**

The Interim Chief Executive introduced a report that provided Members with an update on the Temporary Agency Staff contract with Matrix.

Members were informed that good progress had been made in addressing the historic issues regarding the use of agency staff. The number of Matrix placements was 191, with a spend of £6.3m, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. These figures were higher than the previous report, however, this was attributed in part to the insourcing of education services delivered by Cambridge Education. The Council was committed to a recruitment and retention policy, including greater opportunities for internal applicants, that would reduce the use of agency staff in the future. The likely impact of new IR35 regulations were noted and would be reflected in future reports to the Committee.

A range of issues were discussed including how the Council would deal with the legacy of the relatively high number of agency staff that moved across from Cambridge Education. The Wellbeing directorate had the highest number of agency staff through Matrix and the Committee requested further data on the number and profile of agency staff currently recruited in social care in the next report.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the report was noted.

**Resolved –** That the report be noted.

*(Councillor Bedi joined the meeting)*

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### **34. Arrangements for the Dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer**

The Monitoring Officer introduced a report that requested the Committee to recommend to full Council revised arrangements for disciplinary procedures for the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

The Committee was informed that the proposals as set out fully in the report and appendices would replace the existing process adopted in November 2015 and would reflect the best practice in the Model Disciplinary Procedure and Guidance agreed by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Head of Paid Services issued in October 2016.

It was clarified that dismissal of one of the statutory officers could only take place with the approval of full Council once the process set out had been carried out. Members emphasised the importance of training to enable to properly fulfil their role in dealing with potential sensitive employment matters. The costs of investigation was raised and the Monitor Officer agreed to provide some benchmark fees for an independent investigator, noting that the overall cost would depend on the length and complexity of an investigation.

After due consideration, the Committee agreed to recommend the revised disciplinary procedures to full Council, subject to the approval of the Member Panel on the Constitution.

#### **Recommended –**

- (a) The abolition of the existing Statutory Officers' Disciplinary Panel.
- (b) The creation of an Investigating and Disciplinary Committee to deal with disciplinary matters relating to the relevant officers. This committee to be a politically balanced committee of five Members one of whom is to be a member of the Executive.
- (c) The creation of an Appeals Committee to deal with disciplinary matters short of dismissal relating to the relevant officers. This committee is to be a politically balanced committee of five Members one of whom is to be a member of the Executive.
- (d) The creation of an Independent Panel comprising three people appointed under section 28 Localism Act 2011 to advise Council in the event of a recommendation from the Independent Disciplinary Committee to dismiss a relevant Officer.
- (e) The Investigating and Disciplinary Committee to have delegated responsibility for the suspension of "the relevant officers." In the event of the need for urgency, this function to be delegated to the Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Leader in the case of the suspension of the Head of Paid Service and delegated to the Head of

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Paid Service following consultation with the Leader in the case of the suspension of the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer.

- (f) In the case of a complaint against a relevant officer, the decision whether to refer the matter to the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee will be delegated to the Monitoring Officer following consultation with the Leader in the case of a complaint against the Head of Paid Service and delegated to the Head of Paid Service following consultation with the Leader in the case of a complaint against the Monitoring Officer or the Chief Finance Officer.
- (g) The relevant officers will be given the same right to be accompanied at any disciplinary hearing as all Slough employees. This does not automatically include the right to be accompanied by a legal representative.
- (h) The Monitoring Officer should be tasked with producing a revised disciplinary procedure for the relevant officers based on the model procedure produced by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Head of Paid Services for approval by the Employment and Appeals Committee.
- (i) Thereafter the Employment and Appeals Committee will not have responsibility for the discipline of the relevant officers.

### **35. Employee Wellbeing Programme Update**

The Committee received an update on the staff initiatives introduced to support the employee wellbeing agenda as part of the wider Workforce Strategy.

A range of activities had been arranged through the Employee Wellbeing Project Board comprising of three strands – physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellbeing. Examples included a pedometer challenge, Midday Mile, exercise classes, health checks, healthy eating workshops and the promotion of national initiatives during Mental Health Awareness Week. The budget for this work was limited and activities had been run at low or no cost. However, feedback had been positive and staff would continue to be engaged to design future initiatives and programmes.

The Committee asked about the level of take up of the various activities and it was estimated that between 40%-50% of staff had participated at least one of the events or workshops. Members made a number of practical suggestions for other activities that could be incorporated into the programme and sought clarity on the events in which councillors could be involved. It was agreed that Members suggestions could be provided to the Human Resources team for consideration.

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The Committee recognised the importance of the Employee Wellbeing Programme and welcomed the activities that had undertaken to date. The report was then noted.

**Resolved** – That the Employee Wellbeing Programme Update be noted.

### **36. Organisational Development (OD) Programme Update**

A report was received that provided an update on the achievements of the Organisational Development (OD) Programme 2016-17 and an outline of plans for the next year.

The 2016-17 OD Programme had been designed to promote Slough as a learning organisation with a theme for the year of 'safety and effectiveness'. It included a new and structured mandatory training programme; compulsory corporate induction session for new staff; bite-sized sessions on appraisal training; relevant training for frontline staff in safeguarding and lone working; and a series of management masterclasses. Priorities for 2017-18 included embedding the new corporate values; further mandatory e-learning; and a refreshed management development programme.

The Committee welcomed the measures designed to improve the alignment between appraisals and personal development plans with the Council's strategic priorities. The quality of training was also raised and Members were given assurance that processes were in place to evaluate training programmes and external providers where used. At the conclusion of the discussion, the report was noted.

**Resolved** – That the Organisational Development (OD) Programme Update be noted.

### **37. Family Leave Policies and Procedures**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval of the following Family Leave Policies and Procedures:

- Maternity;
- Paternity; and
- Parental Leave.

The policies had been updated to reflect statutory requirements and clarified a number of points for managers. Several members of the Committee expressed concern that the maternity policy did not provide sufficient provision or clarity for a member of staff suffering from the bereavement of their child. It was agreed that the policy be revisited to explore how this could be strengthened before coming back to the Committee for approval. The other policies should be reviewed for consistency with this issue before coming back for approval as a package of revised policies.

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**Resolved** – That the policies be reviewed and reported for approval at the meeting on 20th June 2017.

### **38. Attendance Record**

**Resolved** – That the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

### **39. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.10 pm)