

Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011.

Present:- Councillors Bains (Chair), A S Dhaliwal, Dodds and A S Wright

Also Present:- Carolyn Cotterell (GMB)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Long, Qureshi and Stokes

PART 1

20. Minutes of the Meetings held on 22nd September and 11th November 2010

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd September and 11th November 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Minute 16 – The “Planning for the Future” exercise - Councillor Dodds requested an update on the number of people who were vulnerable outside the Expressions of Interest process. The Chief Executive advised that changes were still happening so exact figures were difficult to assess at this stage. In the region of 70 expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy or retirement had been accepted. The number of posts being deleted was likely to be in the region of 150. The difference between the two figures could be accounted for by posts which had been deleted because they were vacant posts, where a member of staff had been made compulsory redundant and posts where employees had been redeployed. The Chief Executive stressed that the Authority sought to redeploy members of staff wherever possible.

Minute 17 – Senior Management - Councillor Dodds drew attention to the request the Committee had made for a report on the policy of reducing temporary/ interim staff before any changes were made to the permanent frontline staff. It was Councillor Dodds’ view that this policy was not being adopted in all cases and that the Council was keeping temporary staff at the expense of permanent staff. The Chief Executive advised that the Council was using interims in situations where there was likely to be a review of staffing as this was an accepted measure to create flexibility whilst ensuring service provision. The Authority was undertaking a comprehensive review of every long term temporary or interim or consultancy post and the outcome of this review would be available at the end of March. A number of members of the Committee felt that all jobs available at the Council should be ringfenced to existing staff in the belief that with appropriate training anyone could ultimately undertake any post. The Chief Executive advised that if members were able to quote any specific instances where they believed the redeployment policy was not being applied fairly, HR would review those instances. However employees in the redeployment pool were always considered against the eligibility criteria before any post was open to other internal or external recruitment. Some posts however required specialist

Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11

knowledge and lengthy training in order for the member of staff to be effective and provide the level of service required by the Council.

21. Budget Savings - Staffing

The Committee considered a report setting out the decisions that had been taken with regard to budget savings and particularly those affecting staffing. The report set out details of the 'Planning for the Future' exercise that had been undertaken along with the consultations to streamline senior management positions, re-integrate People 1st into the Council and identify savings within support services areas.

The report detailed the processes that were in place to assist staff who were at risk of redundancy.

Councillor Dodds indicated her concern that posts were being advertised and that these posts should have been kept pending any other staff who were at risk as part of the consultations that were currently underway. The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that the unions had been fully involved in ring fencing and matching decisions and that posts that were advertised externally were those where there had been no-one suitable under the redeployment rules.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the Authority could not delay too long in making appointments it was agreed that consideration could be given to all vacancies below a certain level being advertised for a week internally to give staff more opportunity to express an interest in them.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That consideration be given to all vacancies below a certain level being advertised internally for one week wherever possible.

22. Employee Relations Framework

The Committee considered a report setting out the current position with regard to the Employee Relations Framework and identifying potential changes for the future. The Council was currently considering how to ensure the best employee relations framework for the future and it had been recognised that it may be advantageous to explore the available options. The project was in its infancy and would be subject to detailed consultation with JTUC and the Employment and Appeals Committee.

Councillor Dodds queried the list of recognised Trade Unions which were part of the Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC) and the involvement of certain unions in Town Hall issues. The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that the Unions listed were recognised by the Council historically and the JTUC dealt with things on a consensus basis. The review would pick up

Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11

these matters. An update report would be brought to the future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

23. Future Key issues

The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that this was the first of a series of regular reports to the Committee identifying and informing members of potential future change. The report covered two issues that were likely to have Human Resources and staffing implications for the Council:

- Transactional Services
- Welfare Reform Bill and Universal Credit

With regard to items for future consideration by the Committee the following issues were raised:

- An update on the spend and costs of temporary staff, agency staff and consultants - as this was a matter raised on a regular basis by the committee.
- Role of Local Authority in relation to schools : Policy and Finance
- Public health responsibilities.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

24. HR Statistics Review

The Committee considered the HR statistics for Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2010) and Quarter 3 (1st October – 31st December 2010) including information/trends from exit questionnaires from staff resignations over the last two quarters (July to December 2010).

Members discussed a number of issues including provision of food for staff, stress and the financial pressures some staff may be facing. Members noted that the Council was planning a series of events with regard to financial health to assist staff in difficult period.

25. Members Attendance Record

Noted.

26. Date of Next Meeting - 4th April 2011

It was agreed that the next meeting which had been scheduled for 4th April 2011 should be cancelled.

Councillor Dodds raised an issue that had been referred to the Committee by the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel with regard to the restructuring of the housing service to incorporate former People 1st Housing

Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11

Management Teams. It was agreed that this would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and that the Assistant Director Housing would be invited to attend.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)