

STAFFING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE - MINUTES

Date: Thursday 15 December 2016

Time: 2.00-2.45pm

Place: Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillors B Ashwood, D Brown, Sir P Brown, P Bullen, A Dent (Vice Chairman), P Downes, R Hickford, M McGuire, J Schumann (Chairman), S Taylor and A Walsh

Officers: G Beasley, Chief Executive, W Ogle-Welbourn, Interim Executive Director Children, Families and Adult Services, M Cox, Director of Human Resources, J Maulder, Head of Human Resources Advisory Service and R Greenhill, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies: Councillors B Hunt (D Brown substituting), G Kenney (R Hickford substituting) and J Whitehead (A Walsh substituting)

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

65. MINUTES – 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL WORKFORCE

The Committee received a report by the Director of Human Resources which provided an overview of the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) workforce profile against local population comparisons. Members noted that:

- As of 30 September 2016 CCC had a total employee headcount of 5930 staff (including those within LGSS) which equated to 3839 full time posts. Of that total number 4747 members of staff were women which represented 80% of the workforce. This compared to latest census data for Cambridgeshire which showed a male/ female population split of 49.8%/ 50.2%. However, national figures found around 75% of local government employees to be female so the CCC figure was comparable to the national average;
- The average age of CCC employees stood at 45 with a trend towards an ageing workforce. The wish to recruit and retain younger members of staff to provide a more balanced age profile and ensure the retention of knowledge and skills over time was a live issue;
- Information on ethnicity was supplied on a voluntary basis only. Currently 89% of the workforce had chosen to disclose their ethnicity and 5.2% of this group described themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group. This was comparable to figures within both the wider population in Cambridgeshire and within local government employees working in shire counties. Work was planned in the New Year to encourage more members of staff to volunteer details of their ethnicity to allow a more comprehensive

- picture to be developed. This would be accompanied by appropriate reassurances regarding the retention and use of such information;
- 3.35% of CCC employees currently described themselves as having a disability compared to 16% of the national working age population and 5.8% in a comparable county council. However, declarations often arose at the point at which staff required reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or support from the occupational health service;
 - The rolling annual turnover of staff within CCC stood at 10.7% which was only slightly lower than the public sector average and represented the type of level expected within a healthy and dynamic organisation;
 - Absence levels were showing a positive level of decline across the past five financial years with a projected figure of 6.8 days per full time equivalent (FTE) for 2016/17. This compared favourably with a public sector average of 7.9 days per FTE nationally in 2015;
 - Performance across CCC was generally perceived to be good with 35% staff assessed as delivering a highly effective or exceptional performance in 2015/16. The performance of 5% of staff during the same period was assessed as needing improvement and this was being actively managed through the Improving Performance Policy introduced in January 2016.

The following points were raised in discussion of the report and in response to questions:

- The Chairman noted that this was the first report of its kind to be submitted to the Committee and said that he was keen that it should be developed to reflect member requirements and needs;
- Members expressed their thanks to all staff and voiced their appreciation for the work carried out during the course of the year;
- The high proportion of female workers within CCC and more generally in local government was believed to be due to a combination of factors including the suite of flexible working arrangements the available and the high proportion of female staff employed within social care;
- Members noted that the implementation of the apprenticeship levy would go some way to addressing the low number of under 25s in the organisation (3.6% in 2015), but felt that the Council should be striving to do more than just achieve comparable representation within this age group to other public sector employers. A more detailed breakdown of the age profile of staff together with more information on how the recruitment and retention of younger people was being tackled was requested for a future meeting. This should include how the benefits of a career in local government could be marketed more positively;
(Action: Director of Human Resources)
- It would be useful in future reports to show a more detailed breakdown of the sickness absence rates, including showing figures for long-term sickness alongside general sickness absence rates;
(Action: Director of Human Resources)
- Paragraph 5.3: Members felt that it would be useful in future reports to provide more detail in relation to sickness absence figures relating to anxiety, mental health and depression, including the extent to which these were work-related and whether any evidence existed that more flexible working arrangements such as the opportunity to work from home reduced stress. The Chairman said that it was important for Members to know how the organisation was addressing these issues **(Action: Director of Human**

Resources). The Chief Executive highlighted the role of managers in spotting early signs of these conditions and addressing them quickly, drawing on the variety of support available. The launch of the staff Health and Wellbeing Campaign this year was also designed to provide greater support to staff in developing and maintaining good health in the workplace and beyond. The Committee would be invited to review and comment on the range of support offered to staff at a later date (**Action: Director of Human Resources**);

- Proactive support campaigns were already offered to staff with regard to smoking cessation, but to date there had been less emphasis on targeting obesity. The Director of Public Health and her team were also doing good work in relation to smoking cessation whilst officers were looking at the possibility of rolling out health checks for staff across the County Council following the success of a pilot project in Scott House;
- Members welcomed the work which had taken place across the organisation to encourage more active performance management and performance reviews, although they acknowledged that this remained a challenging change. The Committee would be interested to see at a future meeting whether there had been a statistical change to staffing appeals following changes to member involvement; what training and support was being provided to staff whose performance was assessed as requiring improvement;
(**Action: Director of Human Resources**)
- Members noted that the return rate for exit questionnaires by staff leaving the County Council was quite low and indicated that they would want to keep a watching brief on this;

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions and asked that they should share the report with their political groups and pass any further comments to the Director of Human Resources.

67. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved unanimously:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the agenda contained exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed (information relating to any individual).

68. A CONFIDENTIAL REVIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND ADULTS

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Executive Director for the Children, Families and Adults (CFA) Directorate which provided an update on the review of the leadership structure of CFA and setting out the proposed direction of travel.

It was resolved to:

1. Endorse the proposed direction of travel;

2. Invite the Interim Executive Director for CFA to prepare a fully worked up structure to present to the Committee.

Chairman