

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Employment Committee held on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 at 12.15 pm in the Executive Meeting Room, The Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Donna Jones (in the chair)
Councillor Luke Stubbs (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Simon Boshier
Councillor John Ferrett
Councillor Darren Sanders
Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE

Officers Present

Jon Bell, Director of HR, Legal and Performance
Michael Lawther, Deputy Chief Executive
Roland Bryant, Learning & Development Business Partner

1. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the evacuation procedures. She also advised that the meeting was being broadcast live and could be viewed on the Council's website.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor James Fleming and David Williams, Chief Executive.

Councillor Simon Boshier attended in place of Councillor James Fleming.

Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor John Ferrett.

Councillor Vernon-Jackson apologised for having to leave the meeting early.

2. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 12 September 2017 and 17 October 2017 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes from the meetings held on 12 September and 17 October 2017 each be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. Apprenticeship Levy update (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jon Bell and Roland Bryant introduced the report which updated members on the progress made with regard to apprenticeships in the city council since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017.

Mr Bryant said that PCC is making good progress and is moving towards achieving the target of 146 apprenticeships set by government. Appendix 4 (referred to in paragraph 5.7) details the numbers and showed where the apprenticeships were by vocational area, level and Directorate.

Members agreed that the report was very encouraging and recognised that a great deal of work had been done towards reaching the target.

During discussion the following matters were clarified:-

- The figure of 91 referred to in paragraph 5.7 does not include apprentices in schools.
- It was agreed that details would be circulated to members advising how many of the 91 apprentices came from staff already employed by PCC.
- It was difficult to predict accurately whether the total levy amount would be spent, but work to increase spend against the levy is ongoing with information events being held recently for apprenticeships in leadership and management.
- The amount paid into the digital account each month is available to PCC for 24 months thus enabling time to recruit apprentices against the balance of the account.
- From April 2018 levy paying employers will be able to transfer up to 10% of their levy to any employers that employ apprentices. The guidance and rules for this had yet to be issued at the date of the meeting and decisions as to whether or not the council wishes to make use of this provision will need to be taken at a future meeting of the Employment Committee
- It may be possible to transfer some of the levy to help other smaller external organisations where the levy does not apply rather than lose the money allocated.
- Members agreed that it would be useful to feed back to the LGA that it would be helpful if there was more flexibility on how the levy money could be spent
- The target of 146 has to be met by the end of March
- The drop-out rate in PCC is virtually non-existent
- It was confirmed that employees of those schools that have not converted to academies are PCC employees, but employees of schools that had converted were not PCC employees. However, PCC was working closely with all schools.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

(i) Noted the progress made in relation to; the apprenticeship levy, the procurement of approved training providers, the recruitment of

apprentices and the public sector target applied to PCC.

(ii) Requested a further report to be brought to the Committee next quarter.

5. Pay Policy Statement (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jon Bell introduced the item advising that a Pay Policy Statement must be prepared for each financial year, approved by Full Council no later than 31st March of each financial year and published on the council's website. Following the presentation of the Pay Policy Statement in March 2016, the Employment Committee requested that, in order to increase transparency and public accountability, a draft Pay Policy Statement be presented at an earlier stage of the financial year forecasting the pay policy for that year. This is now the final Pay Policy Statement for publication.

During discussion, the following matters were clarified

- It was confirmed that in section 2 of the policy, the pay of the lowest paid employees has not increased above the level of £7.85 per hour, although the number of employees in that salary bracket has decreased year on year.
- It was confirmed that the statement was retrospective and had already been to the Employment Committee earlier in the year. Going forward the Committee agreed that the report should be brought to the committee at the beginning of the Municipal Year to which it relates and that it was unnecessary to bring it back again unless there were significant in-year changes.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee agreed the draft Pay Policy Statement attached as Appendix 1 to the report to go forward for approval by the Full Council by 31 March 2018.

6. Sickness Absence - Quarterly Report (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jon Bell introduced the report which updated the Committee about levels of sickness absence across the council and actions being taken to manage absence. He advised that there had been some changes to the directorates (detailed in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of the report) meaning that it was not possible to draw direct comparisons in sickness absence where changes had occurred.

Mr Bell advised that a Workplace Wellbeing Co-ordinator, located in Human Resources, has been appointed following a successful bid to the Public Health Transformation Fund. The post aims to improve employees' general wellbeing, increase attendance levels and enable earlier interventions to prevent ill health and reduce costs for the council.

A discussion took place about the two directorates with the highest levels of sickness absence which were Adult Social Care and Public Health. Jon Bell said that Adult Social Care always had high levels of sickness absence and this was partly explained by the nature of their work which often brought them into contact with people who were unwell. In addition, many staff worked in Care Homes where stricter rules applied about when a person could work - so for example a person could be required to work from home for longer in order to protect the health of vulnerable residents. However, the figure is at its lowest level since March 2016.

With regard to Public Health, the headcount has reduced from 66 to 42 over the last 12 months. However, the absence related to leavers will remain in the directorate's sickness figures for 12 months after the individual has left.

Members agreed that absence figures were moving in the right direction but there was still room for improvement.

RESOLVED that the Committee continues to monitor sickness absence, and ensure appropriate management action is taken to address absenteeism.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 pm.

Councillor Donna Jones
Chair