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## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Employment Committee held on Tuesday, 2 March 2021 at 2.00 pm at the Virtual Remote Meeting

### Present

Councillor Ben Dowling (in the chair)  
Councillor Donna Jones (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Matthew Atkins  
Councillor Cal Corkery  
Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE

### Officers Present

David Williams, Chief Executive  
asha Edmunds, Director of Corporate Services  
Peter Baulf, City Solicitor  
Sue Page, Finance Manager  
Jessica Birkett, HR Business Partner  
Richard Lock, Acting Procurement Manager

#### 5. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

The Chair, Councillor Ben Dowling, welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that it was being held virtually because of restrictions imposed following the outbreak of Covid 19.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Darren Sanders. Councillor Matthew Winnington attended in his place.

#### 6. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

#### 7. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 (AI 3)

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

#### 8. Gender Pay Gap Report (AI 4)

##### (TAKE IN REPORT)

Jessica Birkett introduced the report. She explained that it presents the outcomes of the Gender Pay Gap 2020/21, ensuring the Council can fulfil its statutory obligations in respect of the Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations. It also includes an action plan to build on the council's inclusive working practices, to continue to reduce the gap. At the request of the Employment Committee, the report also includes additional data on the

workforce profile by age, gender and whether full time or part time. Appendix 1 includes this additional information, as well as the statutory data that the Council is required to publish in accordance with the Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations.

PCC's gender pay gap is lower than the national average for all employees, full time and part time, and this is down to a number of factors that already exist within the council.

Members were also advised that for the reasons set out in the report at paragraph 3.7.6, the Council will review the data held in relation to ethnicity with a view to including pay gaps relating to ethnicity as part of future Gender Pay Gap Reporting. This has been included in the Action Plan contained within Appendix 1.

During discussion

- it was confirmed that the report covers PCC employees only but any employer with more than 250 employees has to produce and publish its own data
- PCC intends to improve the data collected to enable clarification of why there may be particular variances in certain age ranges.

The Chair thanked officers for the helpful report.

**RESOLVED that the Employment Committee:**

- (1) Noted the key findings of the Gender Pay Gap Report 2020/21 (Appendix 1).**
- (2) Agreed the action plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the Gender Pay Gap report.**

## **9. Quarterly Sickness Absence Report (AI 5)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Natasha Edmunds presented the report which updates the Employment Committee about the levels of sickness absence across the council and the actions being taken to manage absence and promote employee wellbeing. Overall absence levels are down, however they have increased in some areas during the last quarter as detailed in the report.

The highest reason for absence remains as psychological (stress, anxiety and depression), followed by musculoskeletal and coronavirus.

There has continued to be a focus on wellbeing as detailed in section 4 of the report.

During discussion

- It was confirmed that the percentage of absence for stress has remained fairly steady recently but Natasha Edmunds said that she would find out exactly how the data compares against the last two

quarters and will let the Committee members know. She said that an increase is expected though given the ongoing pandemic.

- The training in relation to mental health is being made available generally for all staff and managers and there is also manager specific training to help them support their staff.
- It was confirmed that in services where staff are working from home, there has been a reduction in sickness absence. There is much research to show that flexible and home working reduces the level of sickness absence and PCC is looking at working practices going forward to continue to develop opportunities for flexible working.

#### **RESOLVED that Members**

- (1) Continue to monitor sickness absence, and ensure appropriate management action is taken to address absenteeism**
- (2) Noted the wellbeing activities undertaken to support attendance.**
- (3) Noted the additional wellbeing activities specifically in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- (4) Noted the reduction in absence levels across the organisation**

#### **10. Pay Policy Statement (AI 6)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jessica Birkett introduced the report explaining that the Council is required by section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (openness and accountability in local pay) to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 further clarifies and describes the information and data local authorities are required to publish to increase democratic accountability.

The Pay Policy Statement must articulate the Council's policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff, Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees. It must be prepared for each financial year and should be approved by Full Council no later than 31 March of each year, prior to the financial year to which it relates and be published on the council's website.

**RESOLVED that Employment Committee approves the Pay Policy Statement attached as Appendix 1, to go forward for approval by the Full Council prior to 31 March 2021.**

#### **11. Update on progress towards attaining Living Wage accreditation (AI 7)**

(TAKE IN REPORT (for information only))

Natasha Edmunds introduced the report which was to update the Committee on progress made towards becoming an accredited Living Wage employer. She advised that this would be a standing agenda item for future meetings.

She advised that a Living Wage Working Group has been established comprising officers from HR, Procurement, Finance, Legal Services and

Trade Union representatives. She explained that there are two main requirements to achieve accreditation status

1. All directly employed staff should be paid the Real Living Wage (RLW)
2. All third party contractor employed staff should be paid the Real Living Wage

With regard to 1. PCC currently pays directly employed staff the RLW and has also agreed that all Apprentices and those on the Kickstart scheme will be paid the RLW from 1 April 2021. All LA maintained schools bar one pays the RLW to its employees.

With regard to 2. Procurement has already started work to understand the complexities involved and to identify those contracts in scope. This work also identifies when in scope contracts become due for renewal and where opportunities exist, and where budgets allow, to encourage contractors to become living wage employers.

Achieving Living Wage accreditation is consistent with the PCC Social Value Policy aims and the work to review in scope contracts for Living Wage accreditation purposes will be combined with the work to review contracts as part of the implementation plan for the Social Value Policy going to Cabinet soon. The contract review will also assist in further addressing any financial and legal implications of accreditation and the development of a phased implementation plan for the accreditation process to present to Full Council in due course.

During discussion

- It was agreed that every effort will be made to ensure someone from the LWF can attend the next meeting
- It was confirmed that the LA maintained school not currently paying the RLW wishes to do so but is not currently able to afford it. PCC is working with the school concerned to try to help. It is not possible to mandate the school concerned to pay the RLW and it is not yet known when it is anticipated that the school concerned will do so, but Natasha Edmunds will find out and advise members of the committee.
- The LWF has said that typically it takes around 3 years to become accredited but as this work is being combined with work on Social Value, it is hoped that accreditation will happen sooner.
- It was confirmed that there is an alternative to phased accreditation but this would need Full Council approval and there would be risks from a legal point of view. PCC would have to mandate all suppliers to pay the RLW and currently the cost of this is not known and neither are the procurement risks. The Cabinet Member for Health Wellbeing and Social Care said that from a Health Wellbeing and Social Care point of view this alternative may prove to be counter-productive and risk some of the work already done with some of PCC's suppliers. PCC has signed up to the Ethical and Residential Care Charters and there is a need to integrate all the work being done with PCC's suppliers rather than taking FLW accreditation forward in isolation.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

The report was noted.

## **12. Senior Management Structure - Integration of Health and Social Care (AI 8)**

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The Chief Executive, David Williams, introduced the report which updates the Employment Committee on changes to the Health and Care landscape, including the deepening integration between Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and the Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group (PCCG), changes in response to the departure of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and implications of proposals for a reorganisation of NHS structures through legislation.

He explained that for this Committee the main purpose of the report was to consider the appointment of a new Director of Adult Social Services but that it is also important for the Committee to understand the Council's integration across care and health plus changes in the pipeline that will have an impact. PCC is now quite closely interrelated with our health colleagues with some activity taking place within PCC and some within the NHS.

The Chief Executive explained that as set out in section 3 of the report, Mr Innes Richens took on the joint role of Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) for the City Council to help develop integrated services with PCCG. Mr Richens was supported by Jo York as his Deputy in his CCG role and by Andy Biddle as Director of Adult Care for the council.

Section 4 of the report sets out progress made towards integration and the benefits it brings. Section 5 of the report sets out proposed legislative changes.

The Chief Executive advised that the primary issue for the Employment Committee is to agree to fill the PCC role of statutory Director of Adult Social Services. Paragraph 6.3 sets out the Chief Executive's recommendation that Andy Biddle is appointed to take on the statutory responsibility alongside his operational role as Director of Adult Social Care.

The Chief Executive expressed his personal thanks to Mr Innes Richens.

During discussion

- Members expressed their thanks to Innes Richens for all his work which has been hugely beneficial to the City and the Council.
- Members were also pleased about the proposal to appoint Andy Biddle to the additional role of Director of Adult Social Services.
- In response to a query, the Chief Executive explained that the process of appointing to this role falls within the remit of the Employment Committee. The Committee can ask that appointments are advertised to test the market, but on this occasion, essentially the

recommendation is to widen the existing role to include the statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) role. This is in keeping with other joint roles.

Members welcomed the proposals in the report and approved the recommendations.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

- (1) Approved the appointment of the current Director of Adult Care, Andy Biddle, to additionally become the Council's statutory Director of Adult Social Services (DASS);**
- (2) Requested the Chief Executive to continue to secure deeper integration of council and health services within the Health and Care Portsmouth framework and across the wider health and care system, forming an executive team comprising the DASS, DCS, DPH and Director of Health and Care Portsmouth (NHS post) and Director of Finance (NHS post), all posts having powers to exercise executive functions across both the City Council and the Portsmouth CCG (under s113 of the Act) and with other health providers as appropriate.**
- (3) Recorded its gratitude and appreciation to Mr Innes Richens for his long service to the city and the City Council and wishes him the very best for the future.**
- (4) Noted the changes being proposed to the structure of the NHS and the opportunities and potential implications these changes may have for the delivery of health and care in Portsmouth.**

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm.

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Councillor Ben Dowling  
Chair