

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on
Thursday, 17 January 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Henry Batchelor – Chairman
Councillor Dawn Percival – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Dr. Claire Daunton Clare Delderfield
Philippa Hart Mark Howell

Officers: Patrick Adams Senior Democratic Services Officer
Susan Gardner Craig Head of People and Organisational Development
Bukky Gray Senior HR Advisor
Bethan Gregory HR Advisor

Councillor John Williams was in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson and Councillor Peter Topping. Councillor Clare Delderfield substituted for Councillor Cheung Johnson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Claire Daunton as Vice-Chairman for the meeting, as Councillor Dawn Percival had given her apologies.

4. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented this report, which detailed the requirements of the Localism Act and invited the Committee to recommend the Pay Policy Statement to Council. It was noted that a Pay Policy Statement was agreed annually by Council.

Senior salaries

It was noted that the policy had been updated to reflect the impact of the pay award on salary values.

Flexibility on re-employing staff

It was noted that the policy had been amended to enable former staff below Director level, who had previously been made redundant, to be re-engaged in circumstances where the Council requires specific skills or knowledge. The Council's normal recruitment and procurement rules would always apply.

Incremental pay increases

It was noted that officers needed to demonstrate a good level of performance to be awarded an incremental pay increase.

Golden Hello

The Council had recently agreed a Golden Hello policy that would pay new staff up to £6,000 if appointed to post which had been identified as hard to recruit to in the job marketplace. A percentage of the payment would have to be paid back if the employee left within two years. This payment would apply to external applicants only.

Gender pay gap

It was noted that whilst many organisations had a concerning gender pay gap, the Council actually had a mean gender pay gap of 5.86% in favour of females.

The Committee unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL the approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2019 to Full Council.

5. DISABILITY CONFIDENT SCHEME

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented this report, which recommended the Disability Confident Scheme to Cabinet. It was noted that the Committee had been asked by Council to investigate this issue, after agreeing a motion from Councillor Peter McDonald.

National scheme

It was noted that this was a nationally recognised scheme, which had replaced the two ticks disability scheme.

Meeting the requirements of the Scheme

The Head of People and Organisational Development explained that the Council was already achieving many of the commitments listed in level 1 of the Disability Confident Scheme. She expressed the hope that the authority would achieve Level 2 and then Level 3 of the Scheme, after achieving Level 1.

Task and Finish Group

The Committee recommended that Cabinet set up a Task and Finish Group, consisting of officers and councillors, to investigate how the Council could achieve level 1 of the Disability Confident Scheme.

The Committee unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- A)** That the Council signs up to the Disability Confident Scheme;
- B)** That a Task and Finish Group be established to take forward a work programme aligned to achieving Level 1.

6. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The HR Advisor introduced this report, which invited the Committee to recommend that Cabinet adopt the revised Organisational Change Policy and Procedure. It was noted that the proposed change would allow 12 months' pay protection for staff at risk of redundancy, who successfully apply for a post one pay grade lower. The cost of the change would be offset by a reduction in redundancy costs.

Maternity leave

The HR Advisor agreed to amend the wording in the policy to emphasise the rights of staff on maternity leave.

Suitable alternative employment

It was noted that staff had a right to appeal if they considered that the alternative employment offered was unsuitable. It was suggested that suitable vacancies at other neighbouring authorities within 3C's partnership should be considered for staff at risk of redundancy. It was noted that staff at risk of redundancy were offered training and assistance with the writing of CVs and interview skills as well as other tailored support and skills training.

The Committee unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET the adoption of the Organisational Change Policy and Procedure.

7. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION REPORT SHARED PLANNING SERVICE

The Senior HR Advisor introduced this report, which highlighted the recruitment and retention issues which the planning service has experienced over the last few years and what actions have been undertaken to address them.

Vacancies

It was noted that the Shared Planning Service currently had 30 vacancies, out of a total complement of approximately 140 staff. It was a competitive market with a large amount of construction in the District. The recruitment to the position of Principal Planning Officers was a particular concern. It was noted that many planning officers had left to work in the private sector where the financial rewards were greater.

Misalignment of job descriptions

It was noted that research had shown that whilst other local authorities had the same job titles for planning officers, the actual job descriptions were different. This made comparisons based on salary difficult.

Market Factor Supplement

It was noted that a Market Factor Supplement of 15% had been introduced for senior and principal planning roles. To ensure that this complied with equalities, the supplement was reviewed annually was not consolidated into an officer's salary. As such, officers have found that mortgage and loan providers will not take the supplement into account during the mortgage or loan application process. It was suggested that the Council should explore a form of London weighting, which could be considered part of a salary.

Training existing staff

Training and mentoring was offered to existing planning officers. Secondment opportunities had been offered to existing staff in other services areas, but there were a limited number of people who had shown interest and who have the right skills set for these positions.

Apprenticeships and work experience

The Senior HR Advisor explained that the Planning section had a successful work placement scheme for school and college students and apprenticeships were being considered. The Council had been part of a national Trailblazer initiative to establish RTPI approved apprenticeship routes and had been liaising with Anglia Ruskin

University regarding a student trainee scheme.

Liaising with the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

The Chairman, Councillor Henry Batchelor, announced that he would report the Committee's discussions with the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, as they had agreed that this Committee would investigate this matter instead of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. It was agreed that the Committee should review this issue in approximately four months' time.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on Thursday 14 March at 10am in the Monkfield Room, where it was expected that the following items will be discussed:

- An update on Disability Confident Scheme.
- A report on Councillor Heather Williams' motion to Council on extending maternity and paternity leave for those have had a premature or neo-natal baby.
- A report on the forthcoming staff survey.
- A quarterly performance report on staff sickness and retention.
- A report on relocation fees.

The Meeting ended at 11.30 a.m.
