

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on  
Thursday, 23 February 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor William Jackson-Wood – Chair  
Councillor Sally Ann Hart – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Anna Bradnam Mark Howell  
Richard Stobart John Williams

Officers:	Laurence Damary-Homan	Democratic Services Officer
	Bethan Gregory	Senior HR Advisor
	Clare Lomer Hill	HR Advisor
	Jeff Membery	Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services
	Liz Watts	Chief Executive

Councillor Heather Williams was in attendance as a guest.

Councillor Sunita Hansraj was in attendance remotely.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

## There were no Apologies for Absence.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The error at the start of the Minutes, a misplaced “n”, was removed from the Minutes. With the amendment, the Committee authorised the Chair, by affirmation, to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2022 as a correct record.

#### 4. Update on the Four Day Week (4DW) Trial

The Chief Executive presented the report. Clarity on the tables in Appendix B was provided and it was confirmed that there was an error in Questions 1, 5 and 6, with response 1 being listed as “strongly agree” where it should have read “strongly disagree”. Members stated that the use of email signatures had ensured that there was clear communication around the availability of officers and commended the management of cover arrangements, stating that they had been highly effective and that it had ensured there had not been a drop in service levels. Clarity was given regarding the costs of the Health and Wellbeing survey and Members were informed that existing practice had been adapted to accommodate the four day week (4DW), hence there were no financial implications. The Committee noted that the data presented in the report was recently gathered and had been collated in a short amount of time. Members

acknowledged that the data showed no immediate cause for concern and, whilst correlations were starting to emerge, firmer conclusions could be drawn at a later date as the body of evidence grew and more technical data became available. It was noted that good working practices were emerging as a consequence of the trial, which had started in the planning process, and requested that further information, both anecdotal and measurable, on how good practice was being developed be brought to the Committee at future meetings. Officers informed the Committee that public feedback had been limited since the start of the trial and assured that customer satisfaction data would be presented as it became available.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## 5. **Pay Policy Statement**

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services presented the report and informed the Committee that the statement was produced annually to meet statutory obligations. Members were advised that the report was unlikely to result in changes to organisational operations due to the Council's commitments to fair pay, but officers did comment that the annual production of the statement would highlight if issues did start to arise. It was also noted that the statement was available to the public. The Committee discussed the reasons behind the gender pay gap favouring women in the organisation and noted that a significant amount of staff in the lower quartile were male, with workers in waste the depot making up a large proportion of lower quartile staff. The Committee noted that current minimum hourly rates were above the minimum living wage, as defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and that the Council was ahead of most other authorities regarding pay standards.

By affirmation, the Committee agreed to **recommend** the pay policy statement to Full Council.

## 6. **Workforce Breakdown**

The HR Advisor presented the report and informed the Committee that she was presenting on behalf of the Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Kevin Ledger) who was unable to attend the meeting. Members enquired as to how the data was used and were informed that the report could highlight any issues regarding representation, with the Council's Disability Confident commitments being referenced, but that it was unlikely to have significant impact on Council operations as the Council's staffing had been generally representative of the demographic of the District. Officers confirmed that, whilst personalised data was gathered to produce the statistics, the data in the report was anonymous. Members noted that Councillors were not included in the dataset.

The Committee **noted** the report.

## 7. **Retention and Turnover: Q3 (1 October- 31 December 2022)**

The Senior HR Advisor presented the report and informed the Committee that data from Infinistats would be utilised in future reports to provide current data from other authorities for comparison. Members commended the levels of upskilling of staff to fill vacancies. The Committee discussed data regarding the Performance Indicator value (Chart 1 in the report) and the fact that below target indicated good performance. Members felt that this was not a clear way to present the data and the Senior HR Advisor agreed to explore options on how to present the data more clearly in future reports. The impact of the 4DW was discussed and Members noted that, whilst there was an uptick in turnover

performance which could be an early indicator of success for the 4DW trial, it was too early to draw solid conclusions about the impact of the 4DW. The Committee was informed that exit interviews would include a question regarding the impact of the 4DW on an individual's decision to leave the organisation.

The Committee **noted** the report.

#### **8. Sickness Absence: Q3 (1 October- 31 December 2022)**

The HR Advisor presented the report and advised Members of changes to Attendance Management Policy. The Committee discussed the Council's menopause policy and commended the practices in place; Members were informed that ongoing work was being undertaken to further strengthen the menopause policy.

Members raised queries over the increase of sickness in the Shared Planning Service and the Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services informed Members that they would be briefed on this topic outside of the meeting to ensure confidentiality was not breached. Clarity was provided over the variance statistics provided in the appendix to the report.

The Committee **noted** the report.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.**

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