

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on
Thursday, 14 March 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors: Sarah Cheung Johnson Mark Howell
Peter Topping

Officers: Susan Gardner Craig Head of People and Organisational Development
Chloe Smith HR Advisor

Councillor Heather Williams was in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Claire Daunton and Philippa Hart sent Apologies for Absence. Councillor Clare Delderfield was substitute for Councillor Philippa Hart.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. OPTIONS AROUND MATERNITY, PREMATURE BIRTH AND NEO-NATAL LEAVE

The HR Advisor presented this report on the implications of introducing a premature birth and neo-natal policy. She explained that the Committee could expect the Council to implement the policy once every two years.

Councillor Heather Williams, whose motion on this issue had been agreed by Council, detailed the emotional and practical strains on parents following a premature birth.

It was noted that the Council currently allowed staff to go on paid compassionate leave, but this was discretionary.

The Committee supported Option Four in the report, as this would best support officers who were parents of a premature baby, at a time of uncertainty and the costs to the Council would be affordable. It was noted that a baby was only classed as a neonate until 28 days after its expected due date and it was agreed that the policy needed to take this fact into account.

The Committee unanimously **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET**

That the Council introduces additional maternity and paternity pay and leave for parents of babies born prematurely (before 37 weeks). This additional pay and leave to be paid until the baby is released from hospital or until 28 days after the expected due date, whichever is earlier. At that point the parents will be entitled to their normal maternity

and paternity entitlement.

5. SICKNESS ABSENCE 1 OCTOBER 2018 TO 31 DECEMBER 2018

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented this report, which provided the Committee with the details of the Council's sickness absence for the third quarter: 1 October to 31 December 2018. It was noted that whilst there had been an increase of 15.65% from the previous quarter, this was still a slight decrease for the same period the previous year. It was understood that sickness usually increased in the winter months.

Councillor Peter Topping queried why this report was being considered by this Committee and expressed concern that the Lead Cabinet Member responsible for staffing was not in attendance. The Head of People and Organisation Development explained that when the decision had been taken to discontinue portfolio holder meetings, it had been agreed that reports on staff sickness should be taken to this Committee, as the most appropriate public meeting.

As requested, the breakdown of the sickness figures by department were expressed as a percentage. The Head of People and Organisational Development explained that training had been arranged for waste operatives, to help mitigate the number of operatives off sick due to muscular-skeletal and back and neck absences.

In response to questioning, the Head of People and Organisational Development explained that the Council could provide space for a physiotherapist free of charge. It was noted that it was unlikely that staff that engaged in manual work would pay for their own physiotherapy. It was agreed that this issue would be discussed with management and staff at the Depot.

The Head of People and Organisation Development explained that as part of staff workshops and briefing at the depot a video to raise awareness of male mental health which featured a well known footballer, had been well received.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

6. RETENTION AND TURNOVER: FOR QUARTER 3

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented this report on the turnover of staff between 1 October and 31 December 2018. It was noted that the figure of 0.72% of voluntary leaves was very low.

Flexitime

Concern was expressed at the fact that some officers had accrued over 37 hours of flexitime and so were losing these hours at the end of each month.

Reasons for leaving

It was noted that for the current year only 14 leavers had provided a reason for leaving, whilst 24 leavers had declined to do so.

Presentation of figures

The Head of People and Organisational Development agreed to provide the annual turnover percentage rate in future reports.

Recruitment of staff

It was noted that the Council was accepting CVs for posts, providing that they were

accompanied by a supporting statement relevant to the post. It was understood that using the Council's website and social media was proving more cost effective in recruiting staff than advertising in the more traditional media.

It was suggested that the speed it took to recruit staff should be examined. It was noted that for positions that the Council was constantly recruiting to, there was a rolling advert. It was imperative that the manager was involved in the recruitment process, but the pressure of other work could cause delays.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

7. RELOCATION FEES POLICY

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented this report on the Council's revised policy regarding relocation, accommodation and associated expenses provisions. It was noted that the maximum allowance detailed in the policy of £8,000 was the maximum allowed under HMRC rates. If the Council paid more than this rate it would be taxable.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

8. DISABILITY CONFIDENT SCHEME - ORAL UPDATE

The Head of People and Organisational Development reported that Cabinet had agreed to commit the Council to achieving level 1 of the Disability Confident scheme. The Committee agreed that a Task and Finish Group should be set up to consider the next steps. Councillor Sarah Cheung-Johnson agreed to co-ordinate this.

9. FORTHCOMING STAFF SURVEY - ORAL UPDATE

The Head of People and Organisational Development updated the Committee on the work being carried out to the forthcoming staff survey. The Committee agreed that a survey should be carried out regularly, to allow trends to be identified, and should be carried out by an external organisation to encourage staff to be open and honest.

The Committee recommended to officers that the draft survey should be sent to Committee members before its sent out. The survey should be carried out annually by an external organisation.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed that its next meeting should be held on Thursday 9 May at 10am.

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (EXEMPT)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

The Meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.
