

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on
Wednesday, 20 November 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

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

Councillors: Dr. Claire Daunton Mark Howell
John Williams

Officers: Susan Gardner Craig Interim Director of Corporate Services
Ian Senior Democratic Services Officer
Chloe Smith HR Advisor
Liz Watts Chief Executive

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Peter Topping sent Apologies for Absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019.

4. RETENTION AND TURNOVER REPORT: QUARTER 2 (1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2019)

The Employment and Staffing Committee received and noted a report providing Members with an analysis of the turnover of staff between 1 July 2019 and 30 September 2019. The report highlighted trends, informing recruitment decisions and enabling South Cambridgeshire District Council to develop a resource strategy to drive change in a team or area of the business thus helping to achieve the Council's objectives.

In response to Members' questions, the Interim Corporate Services Director

- made it clear that the statistics related to all those employed by South Cambridgeshire District Council, including those working in Shared Services
 - explained about the availability to all staff of an exit interview, an option that might not be taken for several reasons
 - identified examples of vacancies that were difficult to fill, and possible reasons for this
 - highlighted the opportunities, such as working from home, offered by the Council Anywhere remote working project
 - outlined improvements being made in the Contact Centre

5. SICKNESS ABSENCE 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Employment and Staffing Committee **received and noted** a report on sickness absence for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

Members engaged in a short debate. In particular:

- they established that the statistics included cases that South Cambridgeshire District Council had acquired from Cambridge City Council as part of the transition to shared services.
- In response to a question about how South Cambridgeshire District Council fared in the context of other local authorities, the Interim Corporate Services Director said that because of the need to compare like with like, and given this Council's mix of in-house and shared services, formal benchmarking had not been carried out.
- They welcomed the recruitment and retention opportunities that would flow from the adoption of remote working
- They noted the improved performance of the Contact Centre, training on use of the new portal, and efforts being made to improve career progression within that department

6. REVIEWED ADOPTION POLICY

The Employment and Staffing Committee **received and noted** a report updating Members about the Council's revised adoption policy.

7. REVIEWED PATERNITY POLICY

The Employment and Staffing Committee **received and noted** a report updating Members about the Council's revised paternity policy.

8. REVIEWED SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

The Employment and Staffing Committee received and noted a report updating Members about the Council's revised Shared Parental Leave policy.

9. UPDATE FROM THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Liz Watts, South Cambridgeshire District Council's Chief Executive, attended the meeting for this item.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton, Chairman of the Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group, addressed the meeting. She concluded that the Group had achieved all it could achieve for the time being and should be decommissioned.

The Chief Executive addressed the meeting and highlighted several positive aspects identified by her since taking up her appointment. These included

- The recent 'Away Day' attended by all staff working within the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
- The successful deployment of the 'Council Anywhere' ICT project
- Proposals to update the Council's telephone system

- Changes being made to South Cambs Hall, partly in response to staff feedback
- The way the Elections team had adapted to their fifth Returning Officer in two years

The Committee agreed that Councillor Daunton should produce a final report on the Task and Finish Group's findings, and that the Group should evaluate the qualitative results of the staff survey. The Task and Finish Group could be re-established if necessary.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next scheduled Employment and Staffing Committee meeting would be on Thursday 23 January 2020 starting at 10.00am.

The Meeting ended at 2.55 p.m.
