



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE** held via Zoom on Tuesday, 26th October, 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor G Brown (Chair) Councillor P Ainsley (as substitute)
Councillor J Dale Councillor S Harvey
Councillor O Hemsley Councillor R Powell
Councillor G Waller

OFFICERS PRESENT: Carol Snell Head of Human Resources
Jennifer Holmes HR Manager
Dorann Collins HR Advisor
Tom Delaney Governance Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor K Payne Portfolio Holder

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Bool, who was substituted by Councillor P Ainsley.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 be **APPROVED**.

4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

No questions had been received from Members.

6 NOTICES OF MOTION

No notices of motion had been received.

7 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor R Powell that Councillor G Waller be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year. There being no other nominations the appointment was agreed.

RESOLVED

That Councillor G Waller be **APPOINTED** as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

8 GENDER PAY GAP

Report No. 118/2021 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources, presented the report which informed the Committee of the Council's Gender Pay Gap Data at 31 March 2021.

During questions from Members, it was explained that the data only accounted for those staff who identified as men or women and there was currently no statutory provision to include staff who identify in any other way. It was also explained that the variations between the Council and neighbouring authorities were influenced by many factors such as providing different services. The Head of Human Resources explained that in her opinion and based on national and regional data, the Council's pay gap was typical for a unitary authority. It was also noted that a later report addressed the issue of staff turnover which could be a factor in gender pay reporting should more staff from one gender leave the authority than others. The Head of Human Resources confirmed that the gender of leavers was analysed alongside other factors such as those with disabilities or from a minority background.

RESOLVED

That the Committee **NOTES** the Council's Gender Pay Gap data for 31 March 2021 and the commentary/comparison to the previous reporting periods.

9 FUTURE WAYS OF WORKING

Report No. 118/2021 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources, presented the report which provided the Committee with an update to a previous report submitted in July 2021 regarding the development of the Future Ways of Working model, and the ongoing trial of a Hybrid flexible working model. It was highlighted that staff had largely welcomed the hybrid model citing greater productivity and work-life balance, it was highlighted that the Council would be entering a review phase where it would assess whether policies such as Flexible Working were reflective of the new working model.

In response to questions, it was explained that the reintroduction of parking charges for staff was a return to the pre-pandemic practice and had been a corporate decision which had taken into consideration the Council's financial position and revenue streams available from parking. It was highlighted that discounted parking remained available for staff.

It was requested that officers ensure that analysis of working from home also identified 'negatives' of home-working as well as celebrate positives. Examples highlighted included the struggle for managers to influence change and monitor performance, loneliness from a loss of social interaction, and increases in home bills where the Council could not cover all equipment or costs. In response, the Head of Human Resources assured Members that she was confident these issues were being addressed through the framework of support available to managers and staff for home working and agreed to report back on this at a future meeting. It was also highlighted that some of the issues raised had existed prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the beginning of home-working.

RESOLVED

That the Committee **NOTES** the update and progress of the Council's trial of a Hybrid flexible working model.

10 RETENTION OF STAFF

Report No. 120/2021 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources, presented the report which informed the Committee of the processes the Council follows to help manage the risk of staff turnover and retention and provided data and commentary regarding turnover and recruitment such as the promotion of flexible working as a tangible benefit to recruit staff to key positions.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council was always reviewing individual roles and remuneration, and examining its recruitment processes for improvements such as through accepting CVs rather than requiring a lengthy application form process.

RESOLVED

That the Committee **NOTES** how the Council manages its recruitment, retention and turnover of staff to help mitigate the consequences and impact of losing skills and resource.

11 NATIONAL PAY AWARD

Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources, provided a verbal update on the latest situation with the National Pay Award.

It was explained that there was presently no pay award agreed for April 2021 and the most recent set of demands from the trade unions had been rejected, following which the unions were preparing to ballot on future strike action. This was highlighted as disappointing for staff awaiting a well-deserved pay award following a year of working in a COVID-19 Pandemic environment; there was also a further knock-on effect of delaying an agreement to the pay award for April 2022. The possible impact on services was also raised as a concern for the Council should there be strike action, but it was noted that the ballot threshold was high, and talks would take place with unions regarding exemptions for key services following consultation with managers. It was also confirmed that there would still be a requirement to undertake an assessment of pay points in Grades 1 and 2 in order to remain compliant with the

minimum and living wage requirements. Overall, the impact for the Council was expected to be minimal.

The Chair thanked the Head of Human Resources for her update and highlighted that an underlying cause of the dispute would be the government's announcement of a public sector pay rise but without providing local authorities the funding to implement such rises.

12 WORK PLAN

The Employment and Appeals Committee Work Plan was received, and it was suggested by Councillor G Waller that depending on the outcome of the National Pay Award negotiations and potential strike actions, that the Committee should receive a report on the latest position and this was agreed.

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Employment and Appeals Committee Work Plan be received and the expected items for future meetings were **NOTED**.
- 2) That an item on the National Pay Award be scheduled for a future meeting.

13 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business for consideration.

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.24 pm.

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