



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on Monday, 17th April, 2023 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor G Waller (Chair) Councillor J Fox (Vice-Chair)
Councillor J Dale Councillor S Harvey
Councillor K Payne

ABSENT: Councillor R Powell

OFFICERS PRESENT: Carol Snell Head of Human Resources
Kirsty Nutton Strategic Director for Resources
David Ebbage Governance Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Powell.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2022.

RESOLVED

- a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2022 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 HR POLICIES

Report No.60/2023 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

The report was to seek approval for the Council's Employee Domestic Abuse Policy and a refreshed Probation Policy.

The purpose of the Employee Domestic Abuse Policy was to both make a clear statement of support for employees of the Council who may have been affected by domestic abuse and to identify the support that the Council would provide. The Council's message was very clear that domestic abuse was unacceptable.

Members felt the policy set the right tone and welcomed the policy. Members were happy to see that in 6.3 of the policy, personnel records relating to absence from work would be kept confidential.

Members asked for the wording around Section 5 of the policy to be looked at as they wanted clarity on how support was given to perpetrators of domestic abuse. Officers agreed that they would look at other authorities and introduce a form of wording that would help make it clearer.

It was proposed by Councillor G Waller that the recommendations of report No. 60/2023 be agreed, subject to the wording in paragraph 5 of the Employee Domestic Abuse Policy to be agreed with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Officers. This was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

The Probation Policy had been refreshed to better reflect the importance of a new starter understanding what is expected of them and having the right environment and circumstances to help them learn. The need for a comprehensive and achievable induction plan, carry out 'My Conversation'/professional supervision on a regular basis, give recognition and praise for good performance, and address any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The escalation process if there were issues with senior members of staff was highlighted. Those posts within their conditions of service, had specific measures that are attached to the statutory posts, Members were reassured that there was a process that would be followed which would include East Midlands Councils or the Local Government Association.

It was requested by the Chair for the word 'all' to be removed in 1.1 of the policy and in paragraph 2.4 for the word 'advised' to be placed with 'required'.

It was proposed by Councillor J Fox that the recommendations of report No. 60/2023 be agreed, subject to the wording in paragraphs 1.1 and 2.4 to be changed with what was agreed above. This was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

a) **APPROVED** a new Employee Domestic Abuse Police (Appendix A).

b) **APPROVED** an updated Probation Policy (Appendix B)

8 **GENDER PAY GAP**

Report No.61/2023 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

The report advised the Committee of the Council's Gender Pay Gap data as at 31 March 2022 and provided some commentary to help understand what it meant for the Council.

Members were reminded of the requirements to publish such data on an annual basis – this had been the case since 2017, the intention being to narrow and eliminate the pay differences between women and men.

Gender Pay Gap was defined as the difference between the pay of men and women. There were two measures- Median hourly pay and Mean (average) hourly pay. Each was represented as a percentage of the difference with men's pay.

The overall data showed that the 'mean' hourly rate for females was higher than the male 'mean' salary as at 31 March 2022.

The profile of the Council's workforce saw a further increase in males as a percentage of workforce at 28.8% as at 31 March 2022 – compared to 26.6% as at 31 March 2021 and 25% as at 31 March 2020.

It was clarified to Members that the minus figures within the report meant that the median pay for women was higher than men.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the Council's Gender Pay Gap data for the reporting period as at 31 March 2022 and the commentary/comparison to the previous reporting periods.

9 **STAFF SURVEY**

Report No.62/2023 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

The report provided Members with a summary of the responses and feedback from an All Staff Survey that took place in October/November 2022.

The Chief Executive was committed to undertaking a full staff survey in 2022. The organisation had gone through much change over the last two years. – change of Chief Executive and leadership posts, response to the pandemic, changes to ways of working, and development of a new Corporate Strategy. It was therefore considered timely to reach out to staff and invited their feedback on how the organisation was doing and seek their opinion on a range of issues about their role and working environment.

The response level was 56.5% which officers felt was acceptable but not as high as what they would have wanted. Anything in the 60% region of response would have been in the good category.

Overall the survey provided a positive story with an overall satisfaction level of 68.2% - on par with previous satisfaction levels of 65% and 68%.

Members raised the question around the working hours of Council staff and if it could be carried over to the transformation programme. Officers agreed and felt it needed to be front and centre to how the Council implemented that and to move things through the transformation programme.

Members asked what was being done around the 1 in 4 employees that didn't feel they were being treated fairly and with respect within the authority. Officers wanted employees who felt that way to speak up and to have a voice so the authority could deal with situations and respond appropriately. That information and data was what the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group would be focussing on, and helping people have that voice and to focus on the Council's values. Regular pulse surveys would continue within this area to try and help improve the current figures.

Members were shocked to see that there were still several employees who did not come into the office at all. Officers and the Chief Executive had been very clear that the hybrid framework and ways of working was not about being at home completely.

The Chair requested and this was agreed by Officers that the next time the Council ran one of the pulse surveys, for Officers to provide the management response to this Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the analysis and commentary regarding the Council's employee staff survey that took place in October 2022.

10 EXIT INTERVIEWS

Report No.63/2023 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

Members requested this report at the last Committee and the report provided feedback regarding the analysis of exit interviews for employees to who leave the Council.

The Exit Interview process comprised of two stages. Completion of a first section containing a series of questions requesting an indication of satisfaction/non-satisfaction. Secondly, an exit interview with a member of the HR team - this was a confidential conversation to explore in more detail any responses given in the first section but also to delve into areas not covered elsewhere in the form.

During 2021-22, 14 employees completed an exit interview – this represented a very low return rate of just 21%. In the year 2022-23 (to mid-March 2023), 37 employees completed, representing a return rate of 65%.

Members were interested to see what trends there would be over the next couple of years post pandemic and how work/life balance plays out. Would be a good learning point for the organisation.

The Chair requested a further report in a year's time, this was agreed by officers.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the analysis and commentary regarding the Council's Exit interviews for 2022/23.

11 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

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