



# 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, LE15 6HP on Tuesday, 15th November, 2022 at 7.00 pm

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor G Waller (Chair)	Councillor J Dale
	Councillor J Fox (Vice-Chair)	Councillor K Payne
	Councillor A Walters	Councillor A Brown
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Councillor S Harvey	Councillor R Powell
<b>OFFICERS</b>	Carol Snell	Head of Human Resources
<b>PRESENT:</b>	David Ebbage	Governance Officer
<b>IN</b>	Liam Bottomley	Apprentice
<b>ATTENDANCE:</b>		

## 1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations were invited for the position of Vice Chair of the Employment and Appeals Committee for the Municipal Year 2022-23.

Councillor Walters proposed Councillor J Fox to be Vice-Chairman to the Employment and Appeals Committee, there were no other nominations. Upon being put to the vote this was seconded and unanimously carried.

### RESOLVED

- a) That Councillor J Fox be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Employment and Appeals Committee for the municipal year 2022-23

## 2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Harvey and Councillor Powell. Councillor A Brown attended the meeting as the representative for Councillor Powell.

## 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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It was agreed by the Chair that Agenda item 8 – Apprenticeships be moved to the beginning of the meeting.

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## 8 APPRENTICESHIPS

Report No.179/2022 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

The report updated Members on the Apprenticeship Strategy for the Council and the challenges of recruitment, retention and the complexities of the job market that had emerged since the pandemic was highlighted.

It was also pointed out that the combination of changes/turnover within the HR team that had hampered out ability to drive forward the actions, prioritisation of HR input into the Councils evolving Ways of Working, and emerging recruitment and retention issues on a scale that the Council had not anticipated. This had regrettably had a detrimental impact on the ability to achieve as much as the Council had hoped. The Council had done some realignment within the HR Team and a new Senior HR Advisor would join the Council to pick up the apprenticeship programme.

Miss Snell did emphasise the Council's ethos had always been about quality and outputs rather than chasing 'numbers'. It was important therefore to reflect on what we have been able to achieve and then reset out goals going forward.

The Council have had success where individuals joining as an Apprentice had gone onto various roles within the Council. Most of our programmes were followed as Apprenticeship standards rather than Apprenticeship posts. This was a good outcome and reflected the range and level of support that was provided to staff as part of their development and growth and pursuit of further qualifications.

Miss Snell introduced Liam Bottomley (IT Apprentice) to the Committee who spoke to members about his experience of an apprentice with the Council. The Committee also had the opportunity to ask questions to Mr Bottomley.

A question was raised around the pay rate for apprentices and if the Council wished for the rates to be increased, Carol Snell responded that we currently adopt the national rates and any change could be developed and considered as part of our annual pay policy review.

It was also pointed out to Members that a couple of apprentices did not complete the programme and were unsuccessful in 2020/21 due to several factors around the pandemic and the impact it had on learning.

The Chair asked a question around vacancies that need filling and if the Council considered apprentices that were supernumerary. Carol responded by saying it was not something that was in the programme currently, it would be possible and could be explored but the Council would have to define a role and funding that could be used in that way.

The Chair asked for this to be explored to see if there would be scope to look at invest to save money.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

a) **NOTED** the progress of our Apprenticeship programme and current position.

## **5 MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

### **RESOLVED**

a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 be **APPROVED**.

## **6 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

## **7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

No questions had been received from Members.

## **8 NOTICES OF MOTION**

No notices of motion had been received.

## **9 HR POLICY REVIEWS**

Report No.180/2022 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

It was requested at the previous meeting that an update on HR Policies came to Committee. The report provided an overview for Members of how Rutland County Council as an employer, managed its range of employment policies.

The HR team undertook a range of reviews and refresh of policies in 2015-2017 to provide a policy position and style that would stand the test of time. Any subsequent reviews, refresh or modification therefore takes place as and when required.

The Council also examined the minimum requirements of ACAS as a starting point and review other similar/model policies adopted by other organisations for best practice.

Miss Snell informed the Committee that the Probation Policy and Procedure and also the Sickness Absence Policy would be reviewed and refreshed in the near future. The Restructure Policy will also be considered in light of the work the Council was going through currently with transformation and what potential changes they could have in the future for the authority. The Flexible Working Policy would be re-written to ensure it was in line with Ways of Working practices. These policies would be looked at over the next year.

A question was asked around Umbrella Families and what it meant. Miss Snell responded that it contained a range of policies within one overarching policy, for example it includes, annual leave, compassionate leave and jury service etc.

Councillor Payne asked a question about the policies which had not been looked at for a period of time. Miss Snell responded by saying it did not mean that the policy was

out of date, nothing had occurred as of legislation that would require a change to the policy.

It was confirmed to Members that if the Council received an Employment Tribunal challenge, it would commission an external legal advisor through our legal team.

The Chair requested for the No Smoking Policy to be looked as she was unsure if it covered vaping back in 2015 when it was last looked at. The Head of HR has subsequently confirmed that the existing No Smoking Policy also incorporates vaping.

The Chair also requested the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy to be looked at as the Council was transforming the way it worked with other organisations such as volunteer organisations, we need to be fair to all employees and not to put the business at risk in anyway.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the range of employment policies that the Council had and the process it followed by way of review and update.

## **10 HR POLICIES**

Report No.181/2022 was introduced by Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources.

She explained that the Strategic Director Children and Families had undertaken a review of fostering allowances and measures designed to increase the number of Rutland County Council foster carers. This had included a remodelling of the financial and wider support package that was offered to foster carers to enable us to increase recruitment of foster carers and ensure that we had an appropriate package of support.

A key feature of the policy was paid time off in any 12 month period to be able to attend any training events, attendances at panels or any review meetings.

Members welcomed the report and felt the policy would be beneficial to foster parents as well as potential carers themselves. Members also felt it was well overdue.

It was proposed by Councillor Fox that the recommendations of report No. 181/2022 be agreed, this was seconded and upon being put to the vote the motion was unanimously agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** a new policy of 'Fostering Friendly' for Rutland County Council employees (Appendix A).

**11 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

It was agreed by Members that the Staff Survey outcomes would be considered by Committee at the April meeting.

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.55pm.**

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