

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 7.30 P.M IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors R Callender (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), C Callender, Calver, Chapman, J Henderson, D R Mayzes, Richardson, Scott and Tracey

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett), Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson), Work Based Learning Manager (Debianne Messenger), Human Resources Consultant (Marcia Fuller), Business Support Manager (Katie Wilkins) and Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford)

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Amos, Broderick, Heaney and Miles (with Councillor D R Mayzes substituting).

7. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Griffiths declared a non-pecuniary interest in the agenda items insofar as he was a member of the GMB Union and a Shop Steward.

9. REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

A.1 Pay Policy Statement 2015/2016

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which presented to the Committee the proposed Pay Policy statement for 2015/2016.

The Committee was reminded that Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce a pay policy statement and that those matters which were required to be included in the statutory Pay Policy Statement were as follows:

- A local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer;
- A local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest-paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- A local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other Officers; and
- A local authority's policy on other aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance related pay and bonuses, termination payments and transparency.

Members were aware that over the past two years the Council had been moving incrementally towards the 'Living Wage'. In 2013/14 the Council had removed

spinal column points 4-6, three spinal column points on the pay band and in 2014/15 the Council had removed a further one spinal column point, point 7, making the minimum starting salary, spinal column point 8 (£12,915 per annum, £7.19 per hour).

The Committee recalled that, at its last meeting held on 7 July 2014 (minute 5 [A.3] referred), it had noted the progress made by the Council in moving towards the Living Wage during 2013/14 and 2014/15 and had resolved that the Council would continue to aspire towards paying the Living Wage.

Members were advised that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2015/16 was recommending that the Living Wage be now introduced in order to support staff employed on the lower pay bands (spinal column point 10 and below). This would ensure that all staff received a minimum payment of £7.85 per hour (which equated to £15,145 per annum). The Committee was aware that there could be some staff that could query pay differentials; however it was being recommended that the Living Wage was paid as a non- consolidated lump sum payment so that there was no impact on the Council's pay line or job evaluation.

It was reported that the cost of introducing the Living Wage would be £25,955. However, with a voluntary contribution from the Chief Executive, who had decided not to take his personal inflationary pay award, the cost could be reduced to £23,289. Employees that would benefit from the implementation of the Living Wage included Cleaners, Theatre Staff and Leisure Attendants. It was further reported that UNISON had been consulted and were supportive of the Council introducing the Living Wage.

The Committee was aware that the Pay Policy Statement needed to be approved by the Council before the end of March 2015.

The Human Resources and Business Manager informed the Committee that Standby Payments were currently being reviewed.

After discussion, it was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Richardson and:

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Pay Policy Statement 2015/16, as set out in Appendix A to item A.1 of the Report of Corporate Director (Corporate Services), be approved and forwarded to Council for its consideration, at its meeting to be held on 24 March 2015; and
- (b) recommends to Council that costs be met from existing salary/vacancy provision within budgets.

It was then moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Tracey and

RESOLVED that:

- (c) the Chief Executive's gesture be acknowledged and he be thanked but that this Committee recommends to Council that the full cost of the introduction of the Living Wage be funded from the General Fund budget.

A.2 Domestic Violence/Abuse and the Workplace Policy

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which set out a new policy giving guidance to managers and staff regarding domestic violence and abuse.

It was reported that the aim of the new policy was to provide practical advice and support to employees and managers in situations where a member of staff was suffering from domestic violence and/or abuse and also to ensure that employees were aware of support agencies and contacts in cases of domestic violence/abuse.

It was considered that domestic violence should be treated with the same degree of seriousness as any other form of harassment, violence or abuse and was not to be tolerated. The proposed new policy would provide an explicit statement that offered reassurance to employees experiencing domestic violence and would act as a warning to perpetrators.

The Committee was made aware that in relation to cases of domestic violence and abuse within the workforce of Tendring District Council four employees had been supported by the Human Resources section over the past two years. That support had included contact with external agencies, including the police, housing advice and confidential counselling support.

It was further reported that UNISON had been consulted and were supportive of the Council introducing this Policy.

It was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Chapman and:

RESOLVED that

- (a) the Domestic Violence/Abuse and the Workplace Policy, as detailed at Appendix A to item A.2 of the Report of Corporate Director (Corporate Services), be adopted with immediate effect; and
- (b) the Corporate Director (Corporate Services) be authorised to update the Policy with any future legislative and/or best practice changes.

A.3 Mental Health at Work Policy

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which set out a new policy giving guidance to managers and staff regarding managing and supporting mental health at work.

The Committee was advised that the key elements of the policy were as follows:

- Definitions of mental health;
- Why mental health matters to Tendring District Council;
- Guidance for handling disclosure;
- Prevention – keeping people well within the organisation;
- Early intervention; and
- Referral list for further guidance and support.

Members were made aware that the Council provided a range of support mechanisms for staff including:

- Occupational health;
- Independent Counselling;

- Departmental Health Champions (who could provide signposting guidance to Health in Mind);
- Stress Risk Assessments (including individual advice and guidance from Corporate Health and Safety if required);
- Advice and guidance from Human Resources (referral agencies);
- Risk assessments; and
- Employee benefits e.g. Cycle to Work scheme , ACE Weight Management Courses and the Lunchtime Walking Club.

The Committee was informed that UNISON had been consulted regarding this new policy and that they were supportive of its aims and objectives. UNISON also provided counselling support and advice for its members.

It was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor C Callender and:

RESOLVED that

- (a) the Mental Health at Work Policy, as detailed at Appendix A to item A.3 of the Report of Corporate Director (Corporate Services), be adopted with immediate effect; and
- (b) the Corporate Director (Corporate Services) be authorised to update the Policy with any future legislative and/or best practice changes.

A.4 Shared Parental Leave Policy

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which sought the Committee's approval for the implementation of a Shared Parental Leave Policy, which would provide statutory guidance to employees and managers.

The Committee was advised that The Children and Families Act 2014 had been given Royal Assent on 13 March 2014. In addition to providing greater protection to vulnerable children the Act had also addressed improved flexibility for parents to balance work and family life. Part of the Act had introduced the Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014 which had come into force with effect from 1 December 2014. Those Regulations intended to improve the work/life balance by implementing the following measures:

- from 5 April 2015, mothers, fathers and adopters could opt to share parental leave around their child's birth or placement. This would give families more choice over taking leave in the first year – fathers, and mothers' partners, could take up to a year, or parents could take several months at the same time; and
- adoption leave and pay would reflect entitlements available to birth parents from 5 April 2015 – there would be no qualifying period for leave; enhanced pay to 90% of salary for the first 6 weeks; and time off to attend introductory appointments.

Members were informed that The Shared Parental Leave Regulations would require careful management in order to ensure that mothers, fathers and their partners gained their full entitlement. Officers were therefore recommending that a detailed Shared Parental Leave Policy be implemented, in order to provide clear guidance and advice for employees and managers within the Council.

It was further reported that UNISON had been consulted and were supportive of the Council introducing this Policy.

It was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Richardson and:

RESOLVED that

- (a) the Shared Parental Leave Policy, as detailed at Appendix A to item A.4 of the Report of Corporate Director (Corporate Services), be adopted with immediate effect; and
- (b) the Corporate Director (Corporate Services) be authorised to update the Policy with any future legislative and/or best practice changes.

A.5 Staff Statistics

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with updated and current staffing statistics including:

- (1) Number of Staff Employed – Full Time and Part Time;
- (2) Gender Profile;
- (3) Age Profile;
- (4) Disability Profile;
- (5) Ethnicity Profile; and
- (6) Sickness Absence.

A Member suggested that future reports of this nature should include details of the number of staff receiving long service/loyalty awards from this Council.

It was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Chapman and:

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.17 p.m.

Chairman