**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE,
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY, CO16 9AJ**

Present:	Councillors Chapman (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Calver, Morrison and M Stephenson
In Attendance:	Anastasia Simpson (Assistant Director (Partnerships)), Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)), Ian Taylor (Head of Public Realm), Carol Magnus (Organisational Development Manager), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager), Gemma Mills (HR Advisor), Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker, Chittock and S Honeywood, with no substitutions.

65. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor M Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Griffiths and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Wednesday 7 July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Griffiths declared for the public record that he was a member of the GMB union but had no involvement with Tendring District Council in that capacity.

67. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No Questions on Notice had been submitted on this occasion.

68. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.1 - REMOTE WORKING POLICY REVIEW

It was reported to the Committee that the purpose of the review of the Council's Remote Working Policy was principally to reflect changes to working practice within the Council following the adoption of a hybrid way of working as part of the organisation's Transformation Programme.

The ongoing Transformation Programme had a focus not only on making physical changes to the buildings and offices of the Council. It also had a focus on modernising and enhancing the ways in which staff worked. This updated Remote Working Policy reflected the changes that had been made (in part accelerated as a result of Covid-19) and formalised the practical change in practice that had taken place since the policy was first adopted.

Members heard that the revised Remote Working Policy (and accompanying guidance, namely the Modern Working: Your Guide) followed current best practice, CIPD guidance and current legislation and provided both employees and managers with a robust position on working remotely under a hybrid working framework.

The Policy set out:-

- "*What is remote working;*
- *The benefits and costs of remote working;*
- *Considerations for remote working;*
- *Guidance on remote working;*
- *Implications on contracts of employment;*
- *Health and safety, ICT, other equipment and insurance considerations;*
- *Confidentiality and security data responsibilities".*

It was felt that the implementation of the revised Remote Working Policy would allow the Council to more effectively and consistently support hybrid and remote working practices, with a view to minimising the effect on service delivery and the impact of associated costs to the staffing establishment.

After a short discussion it was moved by Councillor Amos, seconded by Councillor Griffiths and:-

RESOLVED that -

a) the Committee notes the ongoing progress of the Transformation programme in enabling greater flexible working;

b) the Committee further notes and endorses the contents of the revised Remote Working Policy;

c) the Assistant Director (Partnerships) be authorised to update the Policy with any future legislative or best practice changes; and

d) the Remote Working Policy comes back before the Committee in a year's time for a further review.

69. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS & DELIVERY) - A.2 - ADOPTION OF A FLEET MANAGEMENT AND DRIVING FOR WORK POLICY

The Committee had before it the draft policy that had been amended to incorporate the comments and suggestions made at the last Human Resources and Council Tax Committee meeting held on 7 July 2021 (minute 59 referred).

The Committee recalled that this Policy detailed how managers should manage occupational driving risks and set out employee's and other's responsibilities whilst driving for Tendring District Council.

It also supported the recommendations of the Council's Internal Audit report into fleet management. The key recommendations of which were:

- *To ensure fleet operations and drivers are compliant with both legal and corporate requirements.*
- *To highlight areas of interest such as potential disciplinary action in certain circumstances.*
- *To coordinate vehicle roadworthiness by means of MOT checks, servicing and regular safety checks for vehicles and equipment.*
- *To provide information to all drivers on Council business of actions and responsibilities and risk management in relation to vehicles and equipment.*
- *To ensure the Council's Transport / Fleet Manager has responsibility for all the Council fleet.*
- *To introduce a central database for vehicle monitoring and documentation checks for drivers.*
- *To promote consistent use of tracking systems in all Council fleet vehicles.*
- *To review allocation of and use of fuel cards.*

After a brief discussion it was moved by Councillor M Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Griffiths and:-

RESOLVED that:

a) the Committee notes the contents of this report and formally adopts the Fleet Management & Driving for Work Policy; and

b) the Assistant Director (Partnerships) be authorised to update the Policy with any future legislative or best practice changes, in consultation with the Council's Fleet Manager (and others as outlined within the policy).

70. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.3 - GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES REVIEW

It was reported to the Committee that the purpose of the review of the Council's Conflict Resolution Policy and Procedures was principally to reflect changes of procedure in accordance with ACAS requirements and employment legislation (including recent case law).

Members were informed that the ACAS statutory Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures provided basic practical guidance to employers, employees and their representatives and set out principles for handling grievance situations in the workplace. The main principles were:-

- *"Employers and employees should raise and deal with issues promptly and should not unreasonably delay meetings, decisions or confirmation of those decisions;*
- *Employers and employees should act consistently;*
- *Employers should carry out any necessary investigations, to establish the facts of the case;*

- *Employers should give employees the opportunity to put their case before any decisions are made;*
- *Employers should allow employees to be accompanied at any formal grievance meeting;*
- *Employers should allow an employee to appeal against any formal decision made".*

Members were made aware how the revised Grievance Policy and Procedure (and accompanying guidance) followed the ACAS Code of Practice and provided both employees and managers with a robust framework for dealing with an employee's problem or concern at work.

The Policy and Procedure set out:-

- The Purpose and Scope of the policy and procedure;
- Responsibilities of both managers and employees;
- How to raise a grievance - the informal stage;
- The formal stage of the Procedure;
- Appeal stage of the Procedure;
- Role of mediation.

It was reported to the Committee that the implementation of the revised Grievance Policy and Procedures (and supporting guidance) would allow the Council to more effectively and consistently resolve employee's problems and concerns at work, with a view to minimising the effect on service delivery and the impact of associated costs to the staffing establishment.

The Committee was advised that Unison had been consulted on the revised Grievance Policy and Procedures (and supporting guidance) and had offered its agreement and support for the implementation of those proposals.

After a detailed discussion it was moved by Councillor Amos, seconded by Councillor M Stephenson and:-

RESOLVED that the contents of the revised Grievance Policy and Procedure (and supporting guidance) be approved and implemented.

71. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.4 - WORKFORCE STATISTICS UPDATE

Members had before them the analysis of workforce data that provided them with statistics relating to the staff employed within the Council and how that compared to the Tendring district and national averages. This was a standard report that was provided to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee as part of each meeting.

The Committee was informed that at the time of writing the report, Tendring District Council had 495 full time equivalent (FTE) employees. The FTE figure equated to 762

employees in total (including casual workers and learners) and consisted of 376 full time, and 386 part time staff.

As previously reported, amongst the fully contracted staff there were currently 20 employees who were undertaking external apprenticeships, seven of whom were studying for a degree (Level 6) in a number of subjects, including but not limited to: Chartered Surveyor, Chartered Management, Chartered Legal Executive and Digital & Technology Solutions, with one employee studying for a post graduate qualification (Level 7) in Accountancy. Other professional apprenticeships included Human Resources, Audit, Town Planning (*Technical Support)* and Operational Management.

Five of the Career Track Apprentices currently working within the organisation had also progressed from a level 2 qualification and were currently working towards a level 3 apprenticeship.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

72. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.5 - EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING POLICY REVIEW

The Committee heard how the purpose of the review of the Council's Employee Well-being Policy was to bring together the two previous well-being polices: Mental Health Policy and Health & Well-being Policy to form a more collaborative and holistic Employee Well-being Policy, in line with identified best practice.

Members were aware that Health and Safety legislation required employers to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, that meant operating the business in a way that minimised harm to employees' physical and mental health, for example, by ensuring that the demands of jobs were not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

It was reported to Members that the revised policy covered the Council's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

It was felt important that the Council recognised that well-being and performance were linked. Improving employees' ability to cope with the demands of work and to balance work and home life would ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

The Committee was informed that Unison had been consulted on the revised Employee Well-being Policy and had offered its agreement and support for the implementation of those proposals.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and endorsed the implementation of the new Employee Well-being Policy.

73. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor M Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Griffiths and:-

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 11 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

74. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS & DELIVERY) - B.1 - MARKET FORCES REPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

It was **RESOLVED**:-

That a Market Forces Supplement, equivalent to two spinal column points, be applied for all “Environmental Health Registration Board” registered, degree qualified Environmental Health Officers, working in Environmental Health Officer or Environmental Health Team Leader roles, for a period of two years from the point of agreement, at which point a review will be undertaken in line with the Council’s Discretionary Market Forces Policy.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.38 pm

Chairman