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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE, HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JUNE 2016, AT 7.30 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEELEY**

**Present:** Councillors Callender (Chairman), Chapman (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Baker, Broderick, Calver, Everett, Massey and Pemberton

**Also Present:** Councillor McWilliams (Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing)

**In Attendance:** Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett), Head of People, Performance & Projects (Anastasia Simpson), Organisational Development Manager (Carol Magnus), Payroll and Payments Manager (Cathy Calder), Executive Projects Officer (Rebecca Morton) and Democratic Services Officer (Katie Sullivan)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bucke, Porter and Skeels (with no substitutions), Bennison (with Councillor Everett substituting) and Ferguson (with Councillor Baker substituting).

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 26 January 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members at this time.

**4. IIP / STAFF SURVEY**

The Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett) informed the Committee that the Council regularly undertook an independent and confidential staff survey, which was part funded by the Local Government Association. The key findings of the staff survey undertaken by Dr Martin Reddington were as follows:

- From an employee perspective, Tendring District Council continued to have a committed workforce, investing time, energies and concentration to get the job done well, and feeling a sense of pride in doing so;
- Reported levels of organisational engagement had increased – this was the sense of loyalty and advocacy that employees felt towards the Council;
- As the Council continued to cut back on costs, downsizes and restructured its organisation, the Council had very little ‘slack’ in work systems;
- The Council relied on good will and high levels of motivation and performance from staff, in terms of ‘going the extra mile’ and ‘engagement’ with organisational objectives and values; and
- The perception of Tendring District Council as an employer had improved overall since 2013.

Members were informed that the analysis revealed that in order to sustain high levels of engagement by employees in relation to their jobs, teams and wider organisation, the Council should focus efforts on some key areas over which it had a measure of control and which would positively impact the quality of the employment deal:

- 1) Change initiatives should recognise the importance of maintaining as much team cohesion as possible - the ‘social contribution’ of teamwork was a valuable asset and the Council should provide as much support as possible to encourage good quality conversations in relation to problem solving and service delivery.

- 2) Leadership Vision – the Management Team should invest more time in setting out the vision for Tendring. This was currently happening through the development of the revised Corporate Plan. The Council would operate more effectively when managers and employees ‘bought in’ to the vision and confidently look at new and smarter ways of doing things, in the knowledge that the senior team encouraged this approach.
- 3) There was a perception of inequality of pay and benefits when comparing groups of employees. This had been addressed through NJC National Job Evaluation Scheme training and additional staff being involved in job evaluation processes.
- 4) The Council should continue to foster an environment in which staff felt confident that they could raise workplace issues and be listened to and treated with respect. A culture of being able to legitimately ‘speak out’ without fear of intimidation or retribution encouraged greater staff engagement.
- 5) The Council should look carefully at its investment in building capabilities through learning and development. It had achieved a good level of overall proficiency in providing the tools that employees needed to do the job, and if this was backed up with an improvement in knowledge and skills, this would encourage higher performance levels.

It was also evident that the Chief Executive’s personal investment in listening to employees’ concerns and articulating a vision for the future of the organisation had had a discernible beneficial impact. Employees felt more inspired to use their own initiative and more of them felt that Senior Managers had demonstrated a clear vision for the future of the organisation.

Members recalled that, at the previous meeting of the Committee on Tuesday 26 January 2016, they had received feedback from Mr David Abdul on the Investor in People Gold (IIP) assessment undertaken by himself and Ms Gwen Carter-Powell, on behalf of EMB Excellence Limited and IIP UK. The report on the IIP assessment had now been received by the Council.

Mr Knappett reminded the Committee that the Council had been assessed for IIP Gold accreditation and had been accredited as an IIP Gold organisation in December 2015 which had been an excellent achievement. Mr Abdul and Ms Carter-Powell would return for an IIP planning workshop with the senior Management Team over the next few months to consider Tendring District Council’s next IIP steps. The organisation had to re-align itself to the revised IIP Generation 6 criteria and it should be noted that a number of IIP Gold organisations who had gone through the assessment process based on the new criteria had found that they had been re-accredited as IIP Silver or Bronze organisations.

Members were informed that in order to maintain the IIP Gold Standard there would be a lot more work to do going forward but information from the report would help get an action plan together.

Some items on the Council’s ‘To Do List’ included the following:

- Ensuring that the Council’s priorities were understood by all;
- Development of overarching people management themes, including specific behaviours in the delivery of appraisal and one to ones;
- Increased use of coaching as a model for managers;
- Develop a framework for project management;
- Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy;
- Develop a revised Workforce Strategy (aligned to Corporate Plan);
- Learning and Training Policy;
- Continue the IIP Advocacy Group; and
- Prepare and plan for IIP Generation 6.

Officers responded to questions raised by Members in relation to training and development of staff, and apprenticeships.

Councillor Calver proposed, and it was agreed by the Committee, that it was excellent to hear such positive and valuable feedback on the Council both from external sources and from the staff.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted and that the Chief Executive, the Management Team and all staff be thanked for their sustained efforts and commitment to the success of the Council and for the benefit of the District.

## 5. **STAFF STATISTICS REPORT**

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.

The Organisational Development Manager (Carol Magnus) informed Members that the Council continued to actively manage sickness absence and absence management training for managers was scheduled to take place over the coming months and options to reduce viral short term sickness absence were currently being investigated. The Council continued to support employees' mental health using a range of methods to do so, this included provision of an external counselling service, flexible working options/improved work-life balance, corporate gym membership and access to an occupational health specialist.

The Head of People, Performance & Projects (Anastasia Simpson) responded to questions raised by Members in relation to sickness absence and explained the process Human Resources followed for long term sickness.

Mr Knappett informed the Committee that 'Team Spirit', which was a linked system for HR and Payroll, had made it a lot easier to gather statistics as this was a central database for the whole Council and that staff had worked extremely hard in getting the system set up and it had been a great success.

Mr Knappett also informed the Committee that he was delighted to see a significant number of younger employees within the 21-30 age bracket now working for the Council.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

## 6. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME DISCRETIONS POLICY**

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with an updated pension discretions policy.

The Head of People, Performance & Projects (Anastasia Simpson) informed Members that under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 2013, all employers participating in the LGPS were required to prepare and publish a written statement on how it exercised the various discretions provided by the LGPS 2014, LGPS 2008, and LGPS 1997 and the Compensation and Injury Allowances Regulations.

The report updated the Council's previous policy and included the following Regulations:

- Regulation 60, LGPS Regulations 2013;
- Regulation 66, LGPS (Administration) Regulations 2008;
- Regulation 106, LGPS Regulations 1997 (for pre 1 April 2008 leavers); and
- Regulation D11 (2) (c) LGPS Regulations 1995 (as amended in relation to pre 1 April 1998 leavers).

As an admitted body to the LGPS the Council had been required to prepare and publish a written statement on how it exercised the various discretions provided by the LGPS 2014. This ensured that there were fair, transparent and equitable practices in place when responding to individual queries.

The Payroll and Payments Manager (Cathy Calder) informed Members that the significant change in the Council's policy had been that non-contractual overtime had been removed from the exclusions list in the definition of pensionable pay with the introduction of the LGPS 2014. From 1 April 2014 all non-contractual overtime had become pensionable.

An employee's pension pay was the total of:

- All the salary, wages, fees and other payments paid to the employee including any additional lump sum payments; and
- Any benefit specified in the employee's contract of employment as being a pensionable emolument.

The updated policy had been based on Essex County Council's, discretionary decision statement in order to ensure consistency of approach and practice.

The Payroll and Payments Manager (Cathy Calder) responded to questions raised by Members in relation to the scheme.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the revised Local Government Pension Scheme Discretionary Decisions Statement and Criteria for Early Release of Deferred Benefits Policy be approved and adopted.
- (b) that delegation be given to the Corporate Director, (Corporate Services) to update the policy with any future legislative, or best practice, changes.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.25 pm.

Chairman