

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

24 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Boyle (Chairman), Salter (Vice-Chair), Mrs Banevicius, Cox, Greatorex, Rayner and B Yeates

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Eagland.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018, as printed and circulated were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.

10 UPDATE ON WORKFORCE PLAN

The Head of Corporate Services gave an update on the People Strategy discussed at the previous meeting. Unfortunately, she explained that it had not been possible to complete all the sessions with the staff as hoped and the final session had now been planned for mid-October meaning the draft People Strategy would not now be available until the end of October. An update was, however, circulated showing the localised issues from the Heads of Service meetings and the anecdotal group findings were illustrated from the Working Group. The Head of Corporate Services explained that the key areas were in red on the update and the priorities were discussed. It was confirmed that an Employee Survey had been circulated to all staff and the closing date for this was Friday 28 September so an analysis of the results would be available in due course.

It was asked if a percentage of replies was yet known and it was confirmed that we had a 50% return with still a week to go. However, problems had been incurred with some of the operational services who were not having time to complete the surveys whilst doing their day job i.e. Joint Waste Service but this was being overcome.

The culture of recognition where our people feel valued and appropriately rewarded with what matters to them was discussed as members wondered what else we could do to motivate employees. A physical thank you letter or email was all we could do at the moment as members disagreed with an "Employee of the Month" idea as felt this could have a negative effect on the rest of the team. The HR Manager said any ideas would be welcome and the Head of Corporate Services said adding an annual leave day could be something we could offer as this used our internal resources but the needs of the service must be able to allow for this additional absence. The HR Manager agreed that in the operational side of the Council this could be a good incentive, however, the needs of the business must come first and employees are already given flexibility and flexi-time in addition to their annual leave entitlement.

Members noted the progress to date and agreed that we seemed to be going in the right direction and as long as opportunities were available for those who wanted to further themselves then there was nothing more that could be done. The HR Manager agreed that if employees did want to improve and develop themselves then they only had to ask their manager; this organisation did seek to identify talented people and help them achieve their potential.

11 APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

The Committee received a progress report on the apprenticeship target which all public bodies with more than 250 employees must supply by 30 September each year from 2018 to 2021. Discussions took place around the progress for 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and due to the outsourcing of the leisure services the head count was clarified. The levy was explained in more detail and it was illuminated that if any funds placed into our levy account were not used by us within a 2 year period then they are returned back into the Central Government account.

The HR Manager explained that some Councils are using the levy to develop existing staff rather than using the levy to bring in new apprentices. We have found attracting applicants has been difficult in the past 12 months, limited resources and ever decreasing budgets has put strain on existing resources. The cost of some apprenticeships (professional bodies) are more costly that they use to be some are up to £9,000 per year for one apprentice which could be on a 2 year program. Youngsters were just not applying even though Leadership Team/HR have been encouraging managers and challenging all Heads of Service to use the apprenticeship scheme.

A lot of concerns had been around the time to train and unfortunately the training providers are charging a lot more now for the training required for the professional roles. Discussions took place around the central coordination of this scheme and whether it may be better to have a central function looking at doing this as it was realised that some services may not be as appropriate as others to accommodate an apprenticeship. The Head of Corporate Services said this was understood and the potential of a generic apprenticeship had been deliberated but this post would need funding as would technically be an extra post and so Lichfield District Council would need to invest in them. It was hoped an apprenticeship could be considered as part of the development program for each member of staff.

Members agreed that the apprenticeship scheme was a good idea but noted the down side as well. They would have liked to see more under 25's coming through but noted the National Minimum Wage at apprenticeship rate is insufficient to attract the young people and that we were doing all that we could.

RECOMMENDED: That members of the committee note the progress made to date in using our Apprenticeship Levy and achieving the 2.3% workforce target.

12 GENDER PAY REPORTING

The Committee received the Gender Pay Report using snap shot data as at 31 March 2018 as the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (S1 2017/353) require public sector employers with 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap information.

It was recognised that last year Lichfield District Council had a significantly different workforce mix and the change was due to the leisure outsourcing. Most staff in leisure were part-time and a large proportion were female. The comparative data was considered and it was agreed that Lichfield did not compare too badly with other Authorities.

It was confirmed that we do not have any barriers or restrictions on the job roles within the Joint Waste Service but it had a tendency to be men attracted to these roles. A higher proportion of females tended to work part-time and these were often low paid roles such as cleaners. We have a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work regardless of their sex, which is equal pay, and separate to Gender Pay – which is reflection on the make-up of the workforce.

RECOMMENDED: The Committee noted the gender pay gap figures for 2018 and the contents of the report for publication.

(The Meeting closed at 6.50 pm)

CHAIRMAN