

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

24 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors Barnett, Birch, Grange, Greatorex, Humphreys, Robertson, Silvester-Hall and Warburton

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Gwilt and S. Wilcox

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

9 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were signed as a correct record.

10 PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Committee received the final draft of the People Strategy and were notified that approval had been given for the first year along with funding. It was reported that it was a high level document and the first year would focus on developing understanding of the strategy and help plan taking it forward.

It was reported that it was recognised that there was a limit to the resources available and other key projects being undertaken so the strategy was not too ambitious but still aspirational. It was noted that Staff engagement had been good so far.

Staff turnover was discussed and it was noted that it was average to the industry. It was reported that there were still casual and temporary officers which was the majority of the turnover but this may change in the future.

The Committee suggested that it could be advantageous to remove any quantitative outcomes from the strategy as it could lead to pressure being put on Officers to reach those targets to the detriment of other outcomes not being met. It was recognised that not having a goal to reach could result in loss of focus, it was agreed to look at this further.

The culture of the organisation was discussed by the Committee and it was felt that there was a big piece of work needed around this area. It was reported that there had been engagement over the past 18 months and there was now more defined competencies for managers and officers and would form part of the PDR process. It was noted that it was envisioned to have a more business type of environment. PDRs were discussed further and it was reported that there had been a big drive to increase the number undertaken with a clear message of their importance to managers from the Chief Executive. It was noted that there had not previously been a clear vision for what the Council wanted the culture to be and this has prevented development and sometimes hampered performance. It was hoped that now having this vision and sharing it with Officers would help to have a more 'one council' business led organisation.

Vacancies and succession planning was discussed and it was noted that the structure may need review in light of recent resignations.. It was reported the strategy would give the opportunity to develop staff to operate differently. The Committee agreed that there may be a need to prioritise succession planning to before year three of the strategy. The Committee also noted that there was still a challenge to attract younger people into the public sector without offering real career opportunities for them

It was asked what Members could do to help regarding relationships with staff and it was reported that there was a clear policy on working relationships but training may be forthcoming to assist Members to ensure focus and challenge was encouraged by Officers.

It was suggested for the strategy to be on fewer pages to aid buy in from Officers and it was reported that there would be a comprehensive communications plan that sat behind the document and would be broken in to smaller sections. Staff surveys were considered and it was noted that there had been high return rates at times however not a constant and so more targeted means were being investigated including through the PDR process.

It was noted that there would now be a dashboard developed to track the outcomes of the strategy and it was agreed to bring updates to the Committee in the future.

RESOLVED: That the information given be noted.

11 GENDER PAY REPORTING

The Committee received a report on the gender pay gap at the authority as of the 31st March 2019. It was reported that it was an annual requirement to publish this report.

It was reported that Lichfield District Council fared well compared to others nationally and locally.

It was then reported that some of the gap was due to the joint waste service which by the nature of the work was predominantly male and although work had been done to attract women to join that department it was not policy to positively discriminate when appointing to vacancies as this would sit outside of the current recruitment policies.

It was reported and noted that although the percentage of mean gender pay gap had increased since last year, it was due to one male officer only. Generally fulltime women in the organisation are paid more than men.

Members were pleased to note that there was a 0% Median gender pay gap due to the job evaluation system and distribution of our roles against it.

Members were pleased with the report and felt it was a reflection of choice and society which was actually a positive not a negative. It was confirmed that the balance between genders had changed in the higher tiers of management but that was due to recent resignations and the small size of organisation

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

12 APPRENTICESHIPS

The Committee received an update on apprenticeships at the Council and it was reported that it had been a challenge to get and retain them due to capacities to train on the job. It was also reported that the available frameworks were not adapting quickly enough to meet the need of the authority.

It was reported however that there would still be a push to meet targets. It was felt that there was a need to get younger people to join the workforce but this did require an element of pastoral care to support them. It was noted that many other authorities were in a similar situation and it had been discussed whether collaboration was an option to progress

It was noted that the Council was required to publish a report on Apprenticeships and this would be forthcoming.

RESOLVED: That the information given be noted.

(The Meeting closed at 7.12 pm)

CHAIRMAN