

MINUTES of the meeting of the **PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 27 October 2016 at Committee Room C, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2016.

Elected Members:

- * Mr David Hodge (Chairman)
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mr Nick Harrison
- * Ms Denise Le Gal
- * Mrs Hazel Watson

* = In attendance

Apologies:

Mr Peter Martin

In Attendance

Ken Akers, Head of HR & OD
Dominic Forbes, Planning & Development Group Manager
Mark Irons, Head of Customer Services

106/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Peter Martin.

John Furey acted as a substitute for Peter Martin.

107/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [26 SEPTEMBER 2016] [Item 2]

The Committee requested that a note be circulated to the People, Performance and Development Committee containing the final appraisal completion figures following the deadline for services to complete staff appraisals on 31 October 2016.

Concerns were raised regarding the Voicemail Mystery Shopper Exercise undertaken by the Customer Services Team the results of which were annexed to the minutes of the previous meeting. Members stated that the outcomes of the exercise demonstrated that the majority of staff within Surrey County Council (SCC) did not adhere to the Council's Voicemail Policy. Members stressed the importance of officers having a clear and up-to-date voicemail message which includes details of an alternative contact for when they are out of the office. The ability of Members to contact officers in order to deal with Residents' questions and concerns is crucial to the Council delivering on its corporate priority of achieving good customer service. The Head of Customer Services tabled an updated set of results at the meeting which are attached to these minutes as Annex 1. He highlighted that the

results were only a dip sample from across the organisation and so it was not possible to draw conclusions on overall adherence to the Voicemail Policy but stated the results demonstrated that staff needed to be reminded of the importance of following the Voicemail Policy.

The Head of Customer Services asked the People, Performance and Development Committee to lend its support to efforts aimed at reinforcing the message to staff regarding the Council's Voicemail Policy. A letter for staff drafted by the Head of Customer Services which highlighted the importance of adhering to the Council's Voicemail Policy was tabled at the meeting and is attached to these minutes as Annex 2. The Committee was advised that the contents of the letter had been informed by learning into research on behavioural insights and was designed to nudge staff members into adhering to the Policy. Members felt that a strongly worded letter should be directed to managers reminding them to ensure that their line reports have answer phone messages which accord with the Voicemail Policy. The Committee specified that this should come from the Chief Executive and highlight that progress on applying the Voicemail would be monitored by the People, Performance and Development Committee (PPDC).

The Head of HR & OD was asked how many apprentices SCC would be required to employ following the introduction of the Government's Apprenticeship Reforms. Members were informed that early indications had suggested that it would be between 170 and 200 apprentices but that confirmation on the final figures would be released by Central Government shortly.

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. The Head of HR and OD to circulate a note to Committee Members on Tuesday 1 November detailing the Council's position in regard to the number of completed appraisals across SCC.
2. The Head of Customer Services to send a communication on behalf of the Leader to reinforce the importance of adherence to the Council's telephone and voicemail policy and to inform ELT that PPDC will be monitoring compliance in future.

108/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

109/16 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were none.

110/16 ACTION REVIEW [Item 5]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

None

Key points from the discussion:

- The Committee was advised that Cabinet discussions on establishing an All Member Briefing on the Behaviours Framework had not taken place on 18 October 2016 due to other matters arising and the Regulatory Committee Manager was asked to inform the Head of Democratic Services that she go ahead and set up with the All Member Briefing without input from Cabinet.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

RESOLVED: To;

note the Actions Tracker.

111/16 APPRAISAL UPDATE REPORT 2015/16 [Item 6]**Declarations of interest:**

None

Witnesses:

Ken Akers, Head of HR & OD

Key points raised during the discussion:

- Clarification was sought on Recommendation i as it was felt that the wording could lead to some confusion in regard to when the Chief Executive's Direct Reports meeting took place. The Committee agreed that the word 'held' should be inserted before 'in September' in the last line of the Recommendation.
- Members raised some concerns that the use of percentages to determine how many people within a given service should be rated 'Exceptional' against those rated 'Successful' and those rated 'Requires Improvement' could be restrictive and that there could be more flexibility within the distribution of appraisal ratings to ensure that there are no adverse effects on staff. The Head of HR & OD responded by stating that the new Pay and Rewards Strategy was in its first year of operation and that it was inevitable that there would be some initial challenges to overcome in relation to it. The Committee was further advised that the Chief Executive was closely involved in monitoring the implementation of the Pay & Reward Strategy particularly in relation to appraisal ratings so that any initial teething problems arising from the strategy were addressed.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

None

RESOLVED: That the People, Performance and Development Committee notes that:

- i. the services whose individual combined total of the performance levels 'exceeds expectations' and 'outstanding' was 10 per cent or greater provided their rationale to their directors for discussion at the Chief Executive's Direct Reports (CEDR) meeting in September; and
- ii. CEDR accepted the rationale and recommended actions to be embedded in each service to raise the standard of performance of those achieving 'exceptional' and ensure consistency across the organisation. CEDR request that:
 - a. their definition of 'exceptional' 'successful' and 'improvement needed' be used across the organisation;
 - b. every service creates standards that are in line with the three point performance scale and recommended target of five per cent of employees achieving 'exceptional';
 - c. services work with their teams to ensure a common understanding of the level of performance expected within the organisation;
 - d. a process is adopted that cross references objectives set for staff so they have equitable expectations and clear standards that can be compared in a straight forward way at moderation; and
 - e. for HR&OD to embed these actions within organisational policies and guidance.

112/16 PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Dominic Forbes, Planning & Development Group Manager
Ken Akers, Head of HR & OD

Key points raised during the discussion:

- An introduction to the report was provided by the Group Manager, Planning and Development who highlighted the rationale behind the proposal to introduce a Professional Development Programme for specialist roles within the Environment & Infrastructure (E&I) Directorate. SCC is finding it increasingly challenging to recruit and retain specialist staff within E&I due to competition from a number of other private and public sector organisations which was compounded by a national skills shortage particularly in relation to engineering. There were a number of largescale infrastructure projects in the pipeline for the South of England over the next few years including HS2 and Crossrail 2 both of which would put further pressure on the capacity of E&I to recruit and Retain Staff.

- Members were informed that the Professional Development Programme would improve the capacity of E&I to recruit and retain staff within engineering and other specialist roles by offering a clearly defined career path. Despite the additional expenditure associated with putting staff members through professional development courses and training programmes, the proposals were cost neutral as the aim was to recruit staff on lower pay grades and develop their skills and experience through the Professional Development Programme. Additional savings would also be achieved through a reduction in expenditure on agency staff.
- The Committee drew attention to the Project Management Course at the University of Brighton and asked whether SCC was still putting members of staff through this course. The Planning and Development Group Manager confirmed that some staff were still going through this programme and also highlighted that a couple of staff members within E&I had been placed on a course Chichester College.
- The Planning and Development Group Manager was asked to provide the Committee with details of what SCC's current offer is for staff within specialist and engineering roles in order to provide a comparison with what competitor organisations offer. Members were advised that in general SCC's offer for graduates was good but that the lack of a clearly defined career path was harming E&I's ability to retain key staff. The lack of a welcoming bonus and expensive living costs in Surrey were also having an adverse impact on the capacity of E&I to recruit staff. The Planning and Development Group Manager stated that he would circulate full details of the pay and benefits packages offered to staff in engineering and specialist roles within the E&I Directorate.
- Members drew attention to the lack of affordable for key frontline staff and the impact that this was having on recruiting staff across the Council as many people were unwilling to work for SCC due to the high cost of living and the comparatively low wages compared to those offered for similar positions within local authorities in London. It was suggested that the Council could purchase property through a capital loan which it could then rent at a comparatively cheap rate to key workers across the organisation. The Committee requested that the Head of HR & OD should coordinate with the relevant heads of service to explore the possibility of purchasing property for this purpose following which a report should be provided to PPDC.
- The Planning and Development Group Manager was asked whether the introduction of the Professional Development Programme would lead to a reduction in productivity and quality of work as a result of hiring staff with less experience. He responded by stating that employing staff with less experience would have an inevitable impact on teams within E&I but that the alternative was not having these positions filled at all. The Committee was advised that it was also important for SCC to offer a pay and benefits package that would encourage staff to remain within the organisation once they had completed they were fully skilled-up.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. Senior Managers within the E&I Directorate should draw up proposals for what a welcome bonus for staff joining the Directorate would be structured and brought back for consideration by PPDC once this had been completed.
2. Head of HR & OD along with relevant heads of service to draw up proposals for ways in which the Council could invest in property for

housing frontline staff who would be otherwise unable to afford the cost of accommodation in Surrey

3. PPDC to receive details of the current offer that the Directorate has for engineering and other specialist roles.

RESOLVED: That;

the People, Performance and Development Committee approve the introduction of a Professional Development Programme within the Environment and Infrastructure Directorate (E&I) that provides set pay progression for candidates undertaking specific professional training schemes.

113/16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 8]

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

114/16 PAY POLICY EXCEPTIONS OCTOBER 2016 [Item 9]

Declarations of interests:

None

Witnesses:

Ken Akers, Head of HR & OD

Key points raised during the discussions:

The Head of HR & OD introduced the report. The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the officers present before moving to recommendations.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. The Head of HR & OD to work with the Cabinet Member for Businesses Service to draft a letter regarding adherence to the Council's information governance policies for officers and Members.
2. The Head of HR & OD to provide confirmation to the Committee that the intention is to delete the SEND Strategic Lead role following the taking on of additional responsibilities by Julie Stockdale.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the recommendations set out in the confidential.

115/16 PUBLICITY OF PART 2 ITEMS [Item 10]

It was agreed that the information in relation to the Part 2 items discussed at this meeting would remain exempt.

116/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 11]

The Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on 24 November 2016.

Meeting ended at: 11.20am

Chairman

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