

Minutes of a virtual Meeting of the HR Policy Committee held at 2pm on

Tuesday 10th November 2020

PRESENT

Cllr M Chilcott (in the Chair)

Cllr A Groskop

Cllr L Leyshon

Cllr L Redman

Cllr W Wallace

Other Members Present:

Cllr T Munt

Cllr M Caswell

Officers Present:

Mr C Squire - Director of HR & Organisational Development

Mrs V Hayter - Strategic Manager, HR Business Relations

28 Apologies for Absence - Agenda item 1

Cllr Phillip Ham

29 Declarations of Interest - Agenda item 2

Reference was made to the following personal interests of the Members of the Regulation Committee, published in the Register of Members' Interests, which was available for public inspection via the Committee Clerk:

Cllr Mike Caswell – Sedgemoor District Council

Cllr Liz Leyshon – Mendip District Council

Cllr William Wallace – South Somerset District Council

Cllrs Caswell, Leyshon and Wallace declared a personal interest by virtue of receiving a local government pension.

30 Minutes - Agenda item 3

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 were signed as a correct record.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 were signed as a correct record.

31 Public Question Time (PQT) - Agenda item 4

There were no public questions, statements or petitions.

32 New Ways of Working Update - Agenda item 5

The Chair invited the Director of HR & Organisational Development to introduce the presentation.

The Director introduced the activities undertaken; to support and connect staff with the organisation; initiatives providing wellbeing support to staff, including focus groups on health and wellbeing during lockdown; physical wellbeing activities promoted and social and communication activities - including social signing events taking place remotely via Microsoft Teams; making time to maintain social contact with colleagues.

The Director further highlighted the new ways of working task and finish group; considering wider approaches to office environments and the benefits of new ways of working, with view on recruitment and retention; working with representatives from service areas on the vision of a modern dynamic office; The Director explained that offices have been closed during lockdown, whilst enabling access for roles which require attendance, for connectivity issues, or due to personal considerations.

The Director then proceeded to explain the communications and engagement activities; including priority focus on leadership and management; 'ebb and flow'- providing knowledge of remote and office-based working patterns, to enable adequate social distancing, inviting in partners and staff aspirations; consideration of meetings culture and hybrid meeting versions.

The Committee discussed the following points:

- Considering the preferred working styles of future staff and Councillors.
- The pros and cons of travelling to meetings in person.
- The challenges of equality of engagement and interaction for hybrid and remote meetings, with mixed levels of physical and virtual attendees.

- The need to consider potential for inequality when considering virtual and office working.
- The hope that training and support would be given to enable technology to become a key part of the role of a Councillor.

In response to the discussion, the Director referred to:

- The broader equalities potential for potential staff and Members of new ways of working.
- The challenges of establishing culture and etiquette of hybrid meetings.
- Staff Survey information to be brought to a future meeting of HR Policy Committee.

The Chair welcomed the new ways of working, noting the need to ensure that they work for everyone.

33 Partnership with Health – Direction of Travel - Agenda item 6

The Chair invited the Director of HR & Organisational Development to introduce the presentation.

The Director introduced the work being carried out with NHS Colleagues – for information and assurance of thinking across systems.

The Director further highlighted the strategic workforce outcomes – number of challenges locally and nationally; outlined membership of Local Workforce Action Board, some 24/25 members attending monthly, Chaired by Director of HR & Organisational Development; programme of work dominated by response to NHS Plans including NHS People Plan; priority of recruiting via visible, clear routes (apprenticeships, volunteering etc) into the Health and Social Care sector.

34 Priority areas - Agenda item 7

The Chair invited the Director of HR & Organisational Development to introduce the presentation.

The Director introduced the priority areas; noting ministerial interest, 'Breaking Barriers' presentation; consideration of links into schools, colleges and university leavers, to enable them to gain access into health and social care careers; high social value element for Somerset.

The Director highlighted the Nursing degree programme, commencing 2021 and delivered through Bridgwater and Taunton College, bringing a cohort of degree-qualified nurses into the Somerset system; Yeovil College running second year of degree programme for Social Workers; Developmental programmes and consideration of core competencies for working in Somerset across the health and social care system, to support people to move across the workforce, with impacts on retention; Somerset Academy in its fourth year; colleagues from Somerset working on specific projects, with systems thinking across health and social care, working closely with primary care; looking at apprenticeship levy and provider organisations.

The Director further highlighted 'Proud to Care' – a brand initiative to attract to health and social care workforce, with links to schools, colleges and universities; NHS bank – collaborative work with Yeovil and Musgrove, sharing staff banks with the care sector; Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Heart of the South West – supporting 'Breaking Barriers' work; successful wellbeing bid, awaiting confirmation of funding.

The Committee discussed the following points:

- Attracting young people into the field of Health and Social Care, as a career, to engage with them at a younger age- critical education choices are made at age 12.
- Consideration of the approach for exam results and progression, due to the Covid pandemic.
- The challenges in education of obtaining practical soft skills, current situation challenging personal interactions and hands on skills.
- Concern for those at post 16 level - lack of opportunity to access travel and to be aware of those opportunities; suggested highlighting available opportunities to town and parish Councils, and request Health and Councils to facilitate work experience, especially hard to gain, health work experience.

In response to the discussion, the Director referred to:

- Agreement to the need for conversations to happen in respect of career opportunities at Year 5/6 level, the foundations being in place, with further clarification to be sought on coordination at a systems level.
- Proceeding as normal at present in respect of exam results and progression during the pandemic.
- Breaking Barriers work is addressing issue of work experience and issues raised in the discussion above.

35 Reform of Local Government Exit Payments - Agenda item 8

The Chair invited the Director of HR & Organisational Development to introduce the presentation.

The Director of HR & Organisational Development referred to the previous meeting, at which the item was covered; the cap now set at £95,000 on exit pay in the public sector has been approved by Parliament and came into effect on 4 November 2020; Local Government Pension from age 55 upwards and redundancy payments, an individual has to take pension benefits at that point; guidance is expected on how this will be managed by the Local Government Pension Fund; several legal challenges linked to sex discrimination and workforce composition.

The Committee noted the position. Chair thanked the Director for the update.

36 Any Other Business of Urgency - Agenda item 10

There was no urgent business.

(The meeting ended at 3.03pm)