

Minutes of a Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY, on Tuesday, 11 July 2023 at 2.00 pm

Present: Cllr Theo Butt Philip (Chair)

Cllr Andy Kendall Cllr Graham Oakes Cllr Emily Pearlstone Cllr Mike Stanton Cllr Sarah Wakefield Cllr Mark Healey Cllr Connor Payne

In attendance: Cllr Liz Leyshon

Other Members present remotely: Cllr Leigh Redman Cllr Richard Wilkins Cllr David Fothergill

1 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Councillor Faye Purbrick, Councillor Mandy Chilcott and Councillor Tony Robbins.

2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

The minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 28th March 2023 were noted as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

Cllr T Butt Philip and Cllr A Kendell both declared a personal interest as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

4 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

The Chair noted that there had been no public questions submitted by the published submission deadline.

5 Somerset Council Employment Policies including Pensions Discretion Policy - Agenda Item 5

The Chair, invited the Service Manager HR Policy & Projects and the Strategic Manager HR Practice to introduce the report and they highlighted the key areas:

- The report provided details of the policies for the new Somerset Council for consideration and if appropriate, approval, by the Committee.
- As agreed previously, policies meeting certain criteria would be presented to the Committee for consideration and policies not meeting the criteria would be approved via delegated authority to the Service Director - Workforce.
- The new policy was based on the former Somerset County Council policy and this policy permitted application of a greater number of the discretionary regulations than the former District Councils' policies. Members noted the approach taken when determining which discretions to apply had always been to ensure that the costs to

the Council were controlled while providing flexibility for scheme members as allowed by the regulations.

- Continuing to apply this same approach could have a financial impact on Somerset Council simply on the basis that the new Council a larger organisation would have more pension scheme members covered by the policy. It would not be possible to predict costs as any request to apply a discretion would be on a case-by-case basis. Members noted this would be a positive change for former District Council employees.
- The two additional discretions, outlined in the report, once approved would be incorporated into the Pensions Discretions Policy.

There was a discussion and during which the following points were highlighted:

The potential financial impact to Somerset Council; the importance of the equality impact assessment; the redundancy packages as a result of the Local Government Reorganisation; South Somerset District Council had previously decided not to apply either of the two discretions; the benefits for employees.

The Committee agreed to approve the Somerset Council Employment Policies including the Pensions Discretion Policy.

6 Update on Human Resource Matters - Agenda Item 6

The Chair, invited the Service Director of Workforce to introduce and update and the following points were noted:

- Prior to vesting day monthly updates were provided on the lead up to the Local Government Reorganisation due to the large amount of policy changes.
- The People workstream had included: culture and behaviours, restructures and establishment, dynamics programme, health and safety, organisational development, policy and pay grading and starters, leavers and onboarding and an overview was provided on each topic.
- The value workshops had been exploring culture with staff, to identify their experiences of culture and what they would like to see in the new Council. All service directors were involved in the workshops and the outcomes from those sessions, would be used to inform the people strategy for the new Council's behavioural framework.
- More loan working devices had been procured for personal safety of staff. Reports on Health and Safety including policies would be presented to future meetings.

- The Organisational development team had been helping former employees with CV's and preparing for interviews.
- SAP interim structure had been successfully implemented to bring together five thousand plus employees as they transferred to Somerset Council and this would be reviewed at a later stage.
- The Tier 3 recruitment process had been completed.
- Regarding the newly formed directorates and the structures of each this would be discussed with trade unions before a 45-day consultation period.
- Recruitment would continue for positions in the new Council.
- Dillington House would be closing, with about 30 redundancies.

There was a discussion and the following points were raised: the culture workshops had noted staff attitudes towards the MTFP and budget control; the new structures and how those would be shared with members; the process of recruitment for the LCN team; concerns of losing experienced employees (due to the merger) and how this could be mitigated for the whole organisation and/or in certain areas.

The Director of Workforce advised the Committee that the HR teams were putting strategies into place to support employees in the workplace. Team structures could continue to be discussed and some teams would have different restructures depending on the services provided. Heads of Service will look at their teams and operations taking into consideration budgetary issues. It was noted that both the private and public sectors were paying more therefore making a competitive market place for employees, meaning more were leaving. All Managers would need to liaise and listen to their teams to help and support staff at an uncertain time.

The Chair of the Committee, after ascertaining there were no other items of business, thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting 3.25pm.

Cllr Theo Butt Phillip – Chair of HR Committee