

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 15 November 2012

Present: Councillor P Doughty (Chair)

Councillors G Davies AER Jones
P Davies P Kearney
JE Green AR McLachlan
M Johnston L Rennie

38 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any items on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

39 MINUTES

The Committee was requested to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 18 and 24 September and 3 October, 2012.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 and 24 September and 3 October, 2012, be approved.

40 MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report updating the Committee on the current attendance management position.

A breakdown of sickness absence figures for quarters one and two and comparative data for 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 by quarter and by full year, was shown in appendix 1 to the report. Sickness levels for quarter two (2.07 days) showed a slight increase on last year's figure of 1.94 but an improvement on the previous three years (2.49, 2.11 and 2.16 days). The disappointing results for Quarter 1 (2.46 days), reported to September 2012's Committee coupled with Quarter 2's results demonstrated an increasing trend in levels of absence across the authority with a projected end of year figure of 10.28 days against a target of 9.5 days.

The report also contained information on reasons for absence, benchmarking data across other local authorities in the North West, details of a range of initiatives introduced and being introduced to improve levels of attendance.

Resolved – That the content of the report and the current sickness absence data be noted.

41 **UPDATE ON MANAGING WORKFORCE CHANGE AND REDEPLOYMENT**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report providing an update on the on-going management of workforce change and outlined progress on the successful redeployment of employees throughout the Council. There were currently 12 people on the redeployment register. An exempt appendix to the report gave further information on the employees on the register.

The Leader of the Conservative Group commented upon the need for a change management strategy which would need to be in place to manage the impending organisational changes. Councillor McLachlan informed the meeting that the wider change management strategy would be reported to the LGA / Improvement Board on 16 November and the Head of HR and Organisational Development confirmed that this report would be the first step in the change management framework.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

42 **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which sought approval for the extension of the current Occupational Health Services contract.

On 12 July 2012, the Committee agreed that the Council should move to a mixed service delivery model for Occupational Health provision. To facilitate the tendering and contractual award of these externally delivered services, Committee approved an extension (Minute 19 (5) refers) of the existing contract with Capita Health & Wellbeing for a period of 3 months, with a contingency for a further 3 months if required. This would allow for a period up to and including the 12 January 2013. Due to changes in the Council's procurement process this target date had now slipped by a few weeks and the revised actual date for the start of the Occupational Health Contract was now 1 February 2013.

Members sought an assurance that there would be no more slippage in the awarding of this contract and Mark Camborne, Health and Safety Resilience Manager expressed his confidence that this would be the case. The number of pre-qualification questionnaires issued was in double figures.

Responding to Members' comments on the possibility of shared services arrangements, the Head of HR and Organisational Development informed the Committee that having approached authorities across Merseyside, it had not

been possible to pursue this option. The tendering process would, however, not preclude another Merseyside or Cheshire authority from joining in a shared service in the future.

Resolved - That this Committee approves a further extension of the current contract for Occupational Health Services provided via Capita Health & Wellbeing to the 1 February 2013.

43 **EMPLOYEE RELATIONS PERFORMANCE**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which updated the Committee on the number and status of Employee Relation Cases and the Council's performance in managing these issues. The report had been produced following the development of a HR casework system which had improved the quality of management information available on employee relations issues.

The system recorded all formal cases in relation to discipline, grievance, attendance management, capability and Employment Tribunal cases. Cases were recorded where formal action was being taken, considered or a formal investigation was in process in accordance with the relevant policy.

The report gave an analysis of trends within the Council and also some comparative analyses. Detailed information was provided in appendices to the report. There were currently 189 live cases out of a workforce of 4800 (excluding teachers).

Members commented upon the encouraging figures within the report. The need for some more narrative on those cases taking longer than 6 months was suggested, so that trends could be identified. The Head of HR and Organisational Development suggested a report could be brought to the Committee on a six monthly basis, which would enable trends to be more easily identified than if reported on a quarterly basis, subject to any spikes in trends being reported more immediately.

Resolved – That the report be noted and Committee receive a six monthly report subject to any spiking trends being reported more immediately.

44 **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which gave details of a proposed revised Grievance Policy. The new policy had been developed with involvement from a number of key groups and individuals across the Council. This included feedback from individuals who had been involved in lengthy grievances and a focus group of managers, who

had experience of dealing with employee grievances. The views of these groups and individuals were incorporated into the drafting process.

The revised policy was submitted as an appendix to the report. The Council's HR/OD Team would commence a programme of training and awareness raising for managers on the revised policy and procedure which would include an e-learning module.

The Head of HR and Organisational Development responded to Members' comments and stated that officers were always encouraged to resolve grievances informally. Only more serious issues were referred to an Investigating Officer, all of whom had been trained. Mediation was also available in appropriate situations and, within an organisation the size of the Council, could be carried out internally subject to the agreement of both parties.

Resolved – That the revised grievance policy be approved.

45 **MONITORING USE OF COMPROMISE CONTRACTS**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report on the settlement of compromise contracts since the last Committee. Appended to the report was a summary of COT 3/Compromise Contracts the Council had entered into since 24 September 2012.

Responding to a Member's comment, the Head of HR and Organisational Development confirmed that the compromise contract in respect of Employee B, referred to in the appendix to the report, had involved litigation.

Resolved – That the information provided about the use of compromise contracts, be noted.

46 **EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Employment and Appointments Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 October, 2012, were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

47 **EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE (COMPROMISE CONTRACTS)**

The minutes of the Employment and Appointments Sub-Committee (Compromise Contracts) meeting held on 20 September, 2012 were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

48 **APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee meetings held on 11 June and 3, 24 and 26 July, 2012 were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

49 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

50 **EXEMPT APPENDIX - UPDATE ON MANAGING WORKFORCE CHANGE AND REDEPLOYMENT**

Further to minute 41 ante, the Committee noted the exempt appendix to the Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management's report.

It was suggested that future reports on managing workforce change and redeployment should not contain exempt information but that the details of individual cases could be provided to the Party Spokespersons.