

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 6 March 2018

Present: Councillor P Davies (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors G Davies B Mooney
P Gilchrist L Rennie
M McLaughlin

Deputies Councillors S Whittingham (In place of AER Jones)
P Hayes (In place of JE Green)

16 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were requested to declare whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in the item on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

No such declarations were made.

17 MINUTES

The Committee were requested to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of 27 June, 10 October and 18 December, 2017.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings of 27 June, 10 October and 18 December, 2017, be approved.

18 EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS PANEL MINUTES

The minutes of the Employment and Appointments Panels' meetings for the posts of:

- Director for Children, held on 3 and 22 August, 2017;
- Director of Finance and Investment, held on 17 and 31 August, 2017;
- Director for Strategy and Partnerships, held on 22 August and 19 September, 2017;
- Assistant Director: Law and Governance, held on 22 August and 3 October, 2017,

were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

REFERRAL FROM AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive on Absence Management. The report had been requested by the Audit and Risk Management Committee at its meeting on 21 November, 2017 (minute 41 refers) when it had resolved, that:

- the Attendance Management Action Plan be noted and referred to the Employment and Appointments Committee for further consideration; and
- the Head of Paid Service be requested to attend the next meeting of the Employment and Appointments Committee to provide a further update on matters regarding council's approach to stress and absence management for its staff.

The report contained a detailed study into levels of absence in the Council and how absence was being managed and monitored. There was a particular focus on stress and mental health related absence.

In response to comments from Members, Tony Williams, Senior HR Manager, made the following comments:

- Referrals to Occupational Health were made on day 1 for staff reporting mental health related absence and they were triaged within five working days and able to access a whole range of advice and support, including up to 6 sessions of counselling. This was quicker than a GP referral.
- If staff were reticent about reporting a mental health absence there was a confidential route through the Employee Assistance Programme for anonymised reporting.
- Training for Line Managers was being undertaken by MIND since September to enable managers to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health problems.
- He was aware of the organisation, Mental Health First Aid and would be happy to explore what they could offer and informed the meeting that with regard to mindfulness there was an event being planned.
- A number of events had already been held with regard to health and wellbeing, including wellbeing pledges, offers on Invigor8 membership.
- He acknowledged that it might be some time before the impact of these initiatives showed up in the figures of absence for mental health.
- He gave examples of a variety of measures for proactive support, including blood pressure checks and wellbeing roadshows.
- Although a full staff survey had not been held since 2016, there had been a number of mini-surveys and another organisation wide survey was being planned.
- Wirral MIND was training managers to recognise their own stress levels and covered this in their sessions.

- Managers were being encouraged to act as role models in managing their work / life balance and a staff area was being created on the ground floor of the Town Hall, Wallasey for staff to have somewhere away from their desks to have a lunch break.
- Support was in place to try and avoid staff going off sick with stress and if they did go off support was in place quickly.
- A good range of services was available through occupational health.
- Training was ongoing with managers to monitor compliance with the absence policy and there had been approximately 50 of these sessions undertaken so far.

The Committee thanked Tony Williams for his detailed report and comprehensive responses to their questions.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved -

(1) That the detailed data and analysis of the Council's absence levels including stress and mental health related absence and how this is being managed be noted.

(2) That a further update be provided to this Committee at a future meeting.

20 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was -

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

21 CHIEF OFFICER STRUCTURE

The Chief Executive introduced a report upon a proposed Chief Officer restructure following the meeting of 18 December 2017, (minute 15 refers) at which the deletion of the post of Managing Director Delivery Services had been agreed and at which the Chief Executive had been authorised to develop further proposals for the Chief Officer structure of the Council.

The Council's operating environment continued to change with a range of internal and external drivers influencing the way the Council delivered its

services in the future. At the same time the financial challenges for the Council remained significant and there was a need to ensure that resources were managed efficiently at senior level and opportunities to reduce senior management costs were explored. The number and type of roles required at management level were continually under review and had to constantly evolve to reflect the changing organisation and external environment.

This report sought approval for a new operating structure to chief officer (tier 3) level and for the realignment of functional responsibilities that reported to them.

The report also updated the Committee on intended recruitment on a permanent basis to the vacant Assistant Director: Law and Governance post (Monitoring Officer).

The Chief Executive responded to Members' questions on a number of issues and on a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (5:3) – That this Committee:

- (1) acknowledges the overall need for change;**
- (2) approves the new Chief Officer structure for consultation, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (3) agrees the design principles used to determine the Chief Officer structure and authorises the Chief Executive to consult with the Trade Unions and affected individuals; and implement the structure as finalised following consultation;**
- (4) confirms Paul Satoor in the role of Corporate Director for Business Management and David Armstrong in the role of Corporate Director for Delivery Services and Assistant Chief Executive;**
- (5) delegates recruitment for all internal appointments within the structure to the Chief Executive and, where appropriate and alongside any external recruitment process, to make interim appointments to ensure the continuity of business delivery. That this be subject to the usual arrangements for Member appointments applying to this process. With agreement, it is anticipated that the consultation period will run for a period of at least 30 days following this meeting;**
- (6) agrees the immediate external recruitment to the post of Corporate Director for Economic & Housing Growth. In accordance with the**

Council's policies and procedures this will be a Member appointment;

- (7) acknowledges that in some instances the salary of officers operating at tier 4 level may be comparable / equivalent to chief officer pay but that decisions on the tier 4 (and below) structure are delegated to the Head of the Paid service;**
- (8) authorises the Chief Executive, once all other options such as voluntary redundancy, early retirement etc. have been pursued, to consider compulsory redundancy to enable the implementation of the agreed structure;**
- (9) approves the revision of the post of Assistant Director: Law and Governance post to Director – Governance & Assurance and confirms, subject to Council approval and the Council's standard pre-employment process, the permanent appointment of Philip McCourt in the role of Director – Governance & Assurance (Monitoring Officer).**