

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Date and Time: Thursday 9 February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Makepeace-Browne (Chairman), Bailey, Butler, Crampton, Farmer, Neighbour, Radley, Wildsmith and Worlock

In attendance:

Officers:

Daryl Phillips	Chief Executive
Brijesh Mehta	People and OD Manager
Sharon Black	Committee Services Manager

15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022, including Exempt Minutes, were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Proposed by: Cllr Farmer; seconded by: Cllr Butler

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

Cllrs Bailey and Neighbour arrived at 7.02pm.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that Item 6, Feedback from the IDP would be held in exempt session and would be introduced by Cllr Worlock.

Members noted that an employee survey had been undertaken during Autumn 2022 and requested a report and presentation from Officers on the findings of the survey.

Members discussed whether there would be benefit in having a rolling Work Programme for the Committee. It was felt one would be useful and the Chairman would work with Officers to produce this.

Members noted that the Chief Executive would be undertaking a review of the Council's structure and resourcing and would be producing a report for Cabinet and full Council. Staffing Committee would review the structure at future meetings.

The Leader raised the issue of the Chief Executive's annual appraisal, and that he and the other Group Leaders would hold an informal appraisal discussion and set objectives for the forthcoming municipal year.

19 PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2023/24

Cllrs Bailey and Neighbour arrived at 7.02pm during this item

Under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to consider and approve a pay policy statement for the financial year. This report sought approval from Staffing Committee for a statement covering 2023/24 to be recommended to Council.

Staffing Committee noted:

- This statement was a standard document required by law
- The document had been revisited and realigned with current law and formed into a cohesive policy statement

Staffing Committee discussed:

- The number of current vacancies and the turnover of staff in 2022/23
- Whether there were any trends associated with the turnover rate
- That it was planned that a pay benchmarking exercise was to be undertaken with SE Employers
- That there were no plans to grow either the headcount or salary budget in the foreseeable future
- Whether there was guidance for the difference between the highest paid member of staff and the median; and whether Hart was broadly in line with neighbouring authorities

Staffing Committee requested that:

- Annual reports be made to Staffing Committee on trends identified from those leaving the Council, as well as feedback from the staff survey.
- A written response be provided on the actual headcount budgeted for in for 2023/24
- Following the benchmarking exercise, a report be provided about where the Council sat in relation to other neighbouring Councils

Proposed by: Cllr Neighbour; Seconded by: Cllr Radley

DECISION

1. That the Pay Policy 2023/2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be recommended to Council for approval.
2. That the staff numbers and vacancies provided in Appendix 2 are noted.

20 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members discussed whether the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

It was clarified that it was being recommended that the item be discussed in exempt session due to the reference to specific members of staff, both past and present.

DECISION

Staffing Committee agreed that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

21 FEEDBACK FROM IDP

The Committee received feedback from the Chairman of the IDP.

The purpose of the Panel had been to review the officer oversight of the Shapley Heath Garden Community (SHGC) project from March 2021 to the close of the project in November 2021. The Chairman's feedback was discussed in exempt session under the provisions of paras 12 and 13 of Section 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The IDP's overall summary was that there appeared to have been no concerted attempt by officers to comply with the project's governance arrangements and there had been little engagement with the Opportunity Board and no formal engagement with Cabinet.

It was the IDP's view that the impact of the COVID pandemic could not be used as a reason for extremely poor communication, decision making outside of the Council's conventional executive decision-making structures, and the failure to act upon Opportunity Board instructions.

The IDP's conclusion was that the project team's implementation of its tasks specifically from March 2021 to the close of the project in November 2021 were inadequate.

RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE TO AUDIT COMMITTEE:

1. The Council should review its Constitution and revisit the scheme of delegation to officers to ensure that in the event of a civil emergency, powers are used sparingly and only used to incur immediate expenditure, so as to provide support to the emergency services, and that there should be no prolonged or other use of emergency powers where the normal democratic structures of the Council are available and functioning.
2. The Council must never again create a scenario where a major project is set up with governance arrangements that move the project outside the Council's normal scrutiny process.
3. All governance arrangements should make clear who has delegated authority and for what purpose.
4. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy should be revised to ensure that there is confidentiality and the opportunity for independent assessment and review of any complaints made by a member of staff against any member of the Council's Strategic Leadership Team.
5. Human Resources (HR), in consultation with Senior Management, should ensure that
 - a. all roles within the Council have a current Job Description which is recorded on the relevant HR file
 - b. internal secondments should be for a maximum of two years only, with a clear return to original post and salary management plan effective at the time of appointment
 - c. no internal secondment opportunity should be agreed without a service and financial impact assessment being agreed with the 'donor' service.
 - d. all internal secondments should be advertised within the Council with a record kept as to why the post has not been advertised externally any appointment
 - e. any appointment (whether internal or external) should clearly state how the post holder meets the specifications of the job description

Meeting closed at 8.17 pm