
Meeting	Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee
Date	20 September 2021
Present	Councillors D'Agorne (Vice-Chair), Hook, Kilbane and Ayre (substituting for Cllr Aspden)
Apologies	Councillor Aspden

19. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare if they had any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

20. Exclusion of Press and Public

Members enquired about what information could be included in the public covering report and whether in certain cases the department area and how many exits are being noted. Officers confirmed that they could review what information can be published outside of the private annexes.

Resolved:

- i. That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of annexes to Agenda Items 8 and 9 on the grounds that they contained information relating to individuals and the financial affairs of particular persons. This information is classed as exempt under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006);
- ii. Officers to review what additional information regarding a redundancy, retirement and settlement agreements can be published outside of the private annexes.

Reason: To ensure the Committee can consider in private information relating to individuals and the financial affairs of particular persons, while also consider if additional information can be placed into the public domain.

21. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee held on 16 August 2021 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

22. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Cllr Warters questioned the partiality of the Monitoring Officer and raised a complaint made against the Monitoring Officer, he asked that the Committee maintain oversight of the complaint. He also raised questions about the partiality of the Council's administration, he noted a number of standards issues which he questioned the outcome of and how they were run, as well as, procedural issues relating to full council.

Gwen Swinburn highlighted the role of the Committee in the disciplinary role of chief officers of the Council and questioned why the Action Plan in relation to the Public Interest Report lacked disciplinary actions against any Chief Officers. She also questioned standards and complaints against Members and suggested that some Members faced additional scrutiny. Finally she noted her concerns about the Monitoring Officer and that she had made a report of misconduct in public office.

23. Emergency Retention Protocol

Members considered the Emergency Retention Protocol. Officers highlighted the role of the protocol could have in retaining key skills within the Council and noted current issues around the retention of staff in particular Children and Waste services. Officers noted that authorisation of use would be held by Chief Officers and that it would be used carefully to avoid unintentional impacts on equal pay at the Council.

The Committee raised concerns about how the policy could impact staff moral in areas which did not receive the additional payment. Members also questioned whether the policy would disproportionately benefit chief officers. Officers noted the protocol could be used in a variety of circumstances when needed such as to all HGV drivers or too one specific individual in a team where the Council was at risk of losing particular skills.

How the protocol would be triggered was discussed and it was confirmed that Chief Officers would with team managers determine whether the protocol should be used to maintain staff. For example it was noted that

should a team have several staff departures the protocol could be triggered to ensure additional staff are retained.

Monitoring of the use of the protocol was considered and it was confirmed additional work would be required to determine all reporting, it was noted that it would be part of the 3 monthly updates to the Council's Pay Board. Members also enquired about how they could review the protocol and whether a specific budget had been identified for its use. Officers confirmed that the payments would come from the departments existing budget. Members also agreed to receiving four updates per year.

Resolved:

- i. Approved the emergency retention protocols detailed within this paper and noted that a quarterly updates would be brought back to the Committee;
- ii. Agreed to the development of a retention policy as part of the pay policy.

Reason: To ensure the council is able to retain key skills in the workforce which are under pressure, to meet the Organisational Development Plan.

24. Work Plan

Members considered the Committee Work Plan for 2021/22 it was noted that depending on the outcome of the Audit and Governance Committee, then the Committee could be considering the Exit Strategies: Guidance on the use of Settlement Agreements including Special Severance Payments at the 18 October 2021 meeting.

Resolved:

- i. Agreed the Committee work plan.

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

25. Urgent Business

A concern was raised about staffing levels within the Local Plan team ahead of the plan returning from examination. While it was noted that concerns had not been raised with the Executive or Chief Officers, it was noted that officers would enquire to ensure staffing is sufficient to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan.

Resolved:

- i. Officers to ensure staffing is sufficient to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan.

Reason: To ensure the Local Plan is sufficiently staffed.

26. Redundancy

Members considered a report which advised them of expenditure associated with redundancies. Details of the proposals and their implications were set out in the business cases in exempt Annex A.

Resolved:

- i. That the expenditure associated with the proposed redundancies as detailed in the report annexes be noted.

Reason: So that the Committee has an overview of expenditure associated with pension or exit discretions.

27. Pension or Exit Discretion

Members considered a report which advised them of expenditure associated with pension or exit discretions. Details of the proposals and their implications were set out in the business cases in exempt Annexes A.

Resolved:

- i. Note the expenditure associated with each proposal as detailed in the annexes.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of expenditure.

Cllr A D'Agorne, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 6.13 pm].