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Meeting	Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee
Date	18 October 2021
Present	Councillors D'Agorne (Vice-Chair), Ayre (Substitute), Hook and Kilbane
Apologies	Councillor Aspden

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## **28. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, that they might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

## **29. Exclusion of Press and Public**

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix A to Agenda Item 10 (Redundancy) and Appendices A and B to Agenda Item 11 (Pension or Exit Discretion), on the grounds that they contain 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).

## **30. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee held on 20 September 2021 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **31. Public Participation**

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

Gwen Swinburn spoke on several of the agenda items. She expressed a range of concerns and made a number of suggestions, including that proportionality proposals be submitted to Joint Standards Committee before approval by Annual Council and that

Member approval be required for expenditure relating to redundancy and pension or exit discretions.

### **32. Report in the Public Interest: Exit Strategies: Guidance on the use of Settlement Agreements including Special Severance Payments**

Members considered a report which sought approval for guidance prepared in response to the recommendations of the Report in the Public Interest dated 19 April 2021, received by Council on 4 May 2021.

The guidance, contained in Appendix A to the report, took into account the recommendations made by Audit & Governance Committee at their meetings on 8 and 29 September, as well as recently-published guidance from MHCLG on exit payments. Trades Unions and Internal Audit had also been consulted on the guidance and on the Pay Discretions document at Appendix B. Both were content for the guidance to progress and their comments had now been incorporated within Appendix B.

Officers responded to Members' questions on the guidance, confirming that it was more detailed than the previous process and would allow more informed decisions to be made. The exact information required would depend on the circumstances of each case, and it would not be appropriate to include a blanket requirement for all information to be made available in every case.

- Resolved:
- (i) That the Exit Strategies: Guidance on the use of Settlement Agreements including Special Severance Payments (Appendix A to the report) be approved, subject to the following amendments:
    - Paragraph 1 (Definitions) - in the definition of 'Confidentiality Clause', add '*or employer*' after '*unauthorised disclosure by the employee*';
    - Paragraph 6.4 (Process for Approval) – amend paragraph 6.4.2 to require final approval from Statutory Officers, with comments from the other officers referred to and Executive Members.
  
  - (ii) That the Guidance, as amended, be adopted and implemented immediately.
  
  - (iii) That the Head of HR liaise with the Executive and the Corporate Management Team to ensure consistent

compliance with the Guidance, training key officers across the Corporate Leadership Group and Human Resources.

(iv) That the pay discretion document presented to the committee, and that this will progress for approval within the Constitution, be noted.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the recommendations detailed by the council's external auditor in the Report in the Public Interest dated 19 April 2021.

### **33. People Directorate - Appointment of Sub-Committee for Appointment of Corporate Director People and Cover for Current Vacancies**

Members considered a report which presented proposals to make a permanent appointment to the post of Corporate Director of People, following the resignation of the current postholder.

The current Director would leave the council at the end of October, but due to annual leave their last working day had been 8 October. Because of the timings, permission to progress the recruitment had been granted by Committee Members without formal approval at a meeting, and this process was now under way. Members were also asked to confirm the pay package for the post, as detailed in paragraphs 16-17 of the report.

Details of interim arrangements to cover vacancies in the People directorate were set out in paragraphs 9-15. Recruitment was under way to replace the Assistant Director (AD) for Children's Social Care, who was leaving on 5 November. The new AD for Adult Services would join the council on 15 November.

Resolved: (i) That an Appointments Sub-Committee for Chief Officer Appointments be established.

(ii) That authority be delegated to the Sub-Committee to conduct the recruitment process and select and appoint a candidate, subject to the requirements of the Standing Orders on appointments.

Reason: To enable an appointment to be made to the Corporate Director post.

### **34. Changes to Membership of Committees, Joint Committees administered by other Councils, Regional Local Authority Bodies and Other Bodies**

Members considered a report which sought approval for the following changes to the appointments to committees agreed at Annual Council in May 2021:

#### Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

- Remove Cllr Orrell as a Member and appoint him as a substitute.
- Appoint Cllr Daubeney as a Member (to replace Cllr Orrell).
- Appoint Cllr Daubeney as Chair (to replace Cllr Baker, who will step down as Chair but will remain a Member).

#### Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee

- Remove Cllr Hook as a Member and appoint her as a substitute.
- Appoint Cllr Orrell (currently a substitute) as a Member.

Resolved: That the changes to committees, as set out above and detailed in paragraph 2 of the report, be approved.

Reason: In order to make appropriate appointments to committees for the remainder of the current municipal year.

### **Chair's Comments**

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting to be attended by Trudy Forster, Head of HR, who would shortly be leaving the council. He thanked Trudy for her work and wished her well in her new post.

### **35. Work Plan**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the current municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be agreed, subject to the addition of the following to the list of items for the meeting on 20 December 2021:

- Update on the People Directorate recruitment process.

### **36. Redundancy**

Members considered a report which advised them of the expenditure associated with the proposed dismissal of three employees on the grounds of redundancy

The total expenditure amounted to £23,457.61, as set out in the table at paragraph 5 of the report. Full details were provided in exempt Annex A.

Resolved: That the expenditure associated with the proposed dismissal of the employees on the grounds of redundancy, as detailed in Annex A, be noted.

Reason: So that the committee has an overview of this expenditure.

*Note: the above item was considered in private session, in accordance with the decision in Minute 29.*

### **37. Pension or Exit Discretion**

Members considered a report which advised them of expenditure associated with pension or exit discretions.

An overview of expenditure was provided in the table at paragraph 5 of the report. There were no costs to the council in this instance. Full details were set out in exempt Annexes A and B to the report.

Resolved: That the expenditure associated with each proposal, as detailed in the report annexes, be noted.

Reason: So that the council has an overview of expenditure.

*Note: the above item was considered in private session, in accordance with the decision in Minute 29.*

Cllr A D'Agorne, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].

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