
Meeting	Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee
Date	22 January 2024
Present	Councillors Douglas (Chair), Kilbane (Vice-Chair), Ayre and Widdowson
In attendance	Ian Floyd – Chief Operating Officer Helen Whiting – Head of HR Claire Waind – HR Manager

15. Declarations of Interest (5:30pm)

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.

16. Exclusion of Press and Public (5:31pm)

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Annexes A-D to Agenda Item 7 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).

Resolved: That Agenda Item 7 be considered at the end of the meeting after Agenda Item 9.

17. Minutes (5:32pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee held on 2 October 2023 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

18. Public Participation (5:33pm)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

19. Proposed New Chief Officer Structure (5:33pm)

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) presented the report and issued the following amendments to the recommendations in the report:

- i. The Committee agree that prior to implementation the committee receive a further report with any recommendations from consultation and any financial implications associated to potential redundancies.
- ii. The first recommendation in the report be amended to read: “To approve the new chief officer structure as set out within Annex A (noting the proposed statutory officer roles), authorising the COO to progress to consultation”.
- iii. The fifth recommendation in the report be amended to read: “To approve that the proposed structure will be subject to consultation and should further amendments or options be proposed by the COO these will be presented to the committee accordingly”.

In response to questions from members, the COO confirmed that:

- Local Authorities (LAs) each had different systems in place and the change of Assistant Director level roles to Senior Management level roles had been seen in other LAs.
- There was no scope to combine stages 1 and 2 for quicker implementation as it was desirable for staff recruited through stage 1 of the proposals to have input in further stages; some areas could progress to stage 2 quickly as some Directors would remain in their post following stage 1.
- In the proposed structure, Climate had been placed under the Directorate of Housing and Community Services instead of Transport, Environment and Development due to its’ importance council-wide and within communities – it was noted that underneath Transport, it could be perceived as a transport-only issue and limit its’ scope.

The Committee voted 2 in favour (Cllrs Douglas and Kilbane) and 2 abstentions (Cllrs Ayre and Widdowson) to the recommendations in the report, and it was;

Resolved:

That the Committee approved;

- i. That prior to implementation the Committee received a further report with any recommendations from consultation and any financial implications associated to potential redundancies.
- ii. The new chief officer structure as set out within Annex A (noting the proposed statutory officer roles), authorised the COO to progress to consultation.
- iii. Specifically, as part of the new structure the deletion of the following 5 posts:
 - Director of Customer and Communities
 - Corporate Director of Place
 - Director of Economy, Regeneration and Housing
 - Director of Environment, Transport and Planning
 - Chief Finance Officer
- iv. The creation of the following 3 posts:
 - Director of Transport, Environment and Development
 - Director of Housing and Community Services
 - Director of Finance (S151)
- v. A chief officer appointment panel for any roles that require a form of assessment and noted that Council's Management of Change processes will be followed to determine appointments to the revised structure and new roles.
- vi. That the proposed structure would be subject to consultation and should further amendments or options be proposed by the COO these will be presented to the committee accordingly.

That the Committee noted;

- i. The proposal to redefine the existing grades 12, 13 and Assistant Director (AD) to Senior Manager levels 1,2, and 3 respectively, creating a clearly defined Senior Manager level within the organisation, with a view to this being a step towards creating a more agile and efficient organisation with reduced layers of senior management. SM 3 roles would remain classed as chief officers and remain on chief officer terms and conditions. (This was a decision for the Head of Paid service to make).
- ii. That there would be a need to strengthen management arrangements in some areas to address some of the impacts of the proposals, Council priorities, tackle some risk areas, and to adapt to the proposed directorate structure. Wherever possible this would be done by redefining existing roles, and any costs funded by other savings.
- iii. That further reviews would be conducted across all areas of the Council with a view to ensuring greater consistency of structures and ensuring optimal layers within the organisation. The next stage would be to review grades 12, 13 and AD levels, and this would be done with a clear outcome being to achieve significant savings and redesign some roles, in some cases giving greater responsibility and opportunity for career development.
- iv. The significant financial challenges, and that the structure of the Council would need to adapt significantly, with a view to delivering major savings in coming years. Assuming no significant variation in the financial strategy projections the Council would need to downsize significantly in coming years.

20. Workforce Profile Report (6:01pm)

The Head of HR presented the report and issued a correction to the table of figures below paragraph 4. It was noted that the Headcount for Q2 2023 should have read “2573”, and the trend should have read “Increase”. It was noted that paragraph 8 should have read:

- “Looking at the data, voluntary leavers; those who chose to leave the Council and resign, are mostly aged between 35 and 49, this links with increased retirement numbers but also statistically, this is the age band nationally where employees make career choices to either reduce hours and responsibilities or conversely

take their next career step before retirement or they chose to retire”.

In response to questions from members, the Head of HR and HR Manager confirmed that:

- The age profile of individual vacancies were not tracked but were instead mapped as part of a more general council-wide vacancy monitoring.
- Support was in place for employees under the Adult Social Care Directorate on long-term sickness, however these figures were still significantly higher than those under the Children and Education Directorate.
- Absence and Sickness reasons were mapped for individual directorates to target support and relevant referrals.
- There was an increasing focus on improving diversity in roles that sit higher up in the grade structure.
- City of York Council (CYC) profile monitoring was not in place for agencies and organisations working with CYC.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the report and workforce profile provided in Annex A of the report.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of the workforce profile.

21. Redundancy, Retirement and Settlement Agreements (6:18pm)

The Head of HR presented the report and the Committee entered into private session for the consideration of Annexes A-D of the report.

Resolved: That the Committee noted the expenditure associated with each proposal as detailed in Annexes A-D.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of expenditure.

22. Work Plan (6:17pm)

Members considered and confirmed the draft work plan for the municipal year 2023-2024.

It was confirmed that the Committee would receive a further report by the COO on the Proposed New Chief Officer Structure in the meeting scheduled for 4 March 2024.

Resolved: That the members confirm and accept the committee's draft work plan for the municipal year 2023-2024.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a programme of work for the municipal year 2023-2024.

Cllr Douglas, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.29 pm].