

STAFFING COMMITTEE
Monday, 29th April, 2019

Present:- Councillor Alam (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Read and Watson.

14. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF ANY PART OF THE AGENDA.

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

15. TO DETERMINE ANY ITEM WHICH THE CHAIRMAN IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

The Chair advised that there were no items of business that would require urgent consideration.

16. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES SENIOR MANAGEMENT - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Consideration was given to a report which proposed the creation of a new Assistant Director post for Children's Social Care within the Children and Young People's Services directorate and proposed the deletion of the current Deputy Strategic Director post.

It was reported that a Deputy Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services was created as part of the response to government intervention. Following the 'good' Ofsted judgement in 2018 and in line with most other Local Authorities, it was proposed that the Deputy Director post should be deleted and an Assistant Director post be established, which would have responsibility for all children's social care functions, which included:-

- referral and assessment
- child protection
- safeguarding
- looked after children and
- leaving care services.

It was further reported that the post would carry a range of statutory duties in relation to those functions, including agency decision maker for fostering and adoption. Members noted that the role of deputy for the Strategic Director would be undertaken as required and as appropriate by the Assistant Directors within Children and Young People's Services.

Resolved:-

1. That a new Assistant Director post in Children and Young People's Services directorate be established.
2. That the post of Deputy Strategic Director be deleted from the establishment.

17. UNISON VIOLENCE AT WORK CHARTER

Consideration was given to a report which provided detail in respect of UNISON's Violence at Work Charter, which set out measures that UNISON would like employers to put in place to prevent people that they are responsible for from being assaulted as they carry out their work.

It was reported that in order to qualify for the UNISON Violence at Work Charter mark, employers must meet ten standards and it was noted that the Council's current practices were in line with the key principles of the Charter, which were covered by the Health and Safety Policy.

It was suggested that a public awareness campaign to accompany the proposed adoption of the Charter would be helpful in highlighting the issues and difficulties faced by frontline staff both within Council buildings and working in communities.

Resolved:-

- 1. That the Council be recommended to become a signatory to UNISON's Violence at Work Charter.**
2. That the existing activities of the Council in meeting the aims of the Charter be noted.
3. That a public awareness campaign be undertaken to promote the adoption of the Charter.

18. PENSION DISCRETION - FLEXIBLE RETIREMENTS

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of the pension discretion set by the Council in relation to flexible retirement and detailed options for review.

It was reported that the Council's Flexible Retirement Policy stated that applications would only be considered for 'significant' permanent contractual reductions to either grade or weekly contractual hours. In the policy 'significant' was defined as a change by which budget savings, or 'vacated' hours/position would enable the recruitment of a suitable replacement to maintain service delivery. The policy further stated that such reductions would be in the region of at least 40% of hours so that alternative resourcing options could be explored.

It was further reported that the current requirement for a 40% reduction does not always support business requirements, with requests being unable to be supported by management. Where requests were supported it could cause recruitment difficulties for a 2 day replacement or it could lead to rejection of the request because it impacts adversely on business need.

The report detailed a number of options:-

- Option 1 - Maintain current arrangements which have been in place for a number of years.
- Option 2 - Adopt a minimum 50% reduction so services are left with half a post to recruit to.
- Option 3 - Adopt a minimum 20% reduction where services are able to absorb the 1 day loss and are not allowed to backfill.
- Option 4 - Amend the discretion in line with the Local Government Pension Regulation.

In order to allow services the most flexibility in respect of service need, Option 4 was recommended so that the discretion would be aligned to the Local Government Pension Regulations. The business case aspect of the application for any costs associated with the request would continue to be dependent on those costs being covered by the reduction in salary costs.

Resolved:-

1. That the Council's discretion be amended to mirror the Local Government Pension Regulations.
2. That the revised discretion be applied based on consideration of the following criteria:-
 - Any reduction in working hours or salary must be permanent
 - The reduction in hours or reduction in responsibility allowing the member to be paid a reduced salary must not impact upon the organisation's ability to carry out its business efficiently and effectively
 - The individual flexible retirement concerned must support the organisation's overall business plan and strategy
 - Any costs associated with flexible retirement must be funded within the overall service budget.