

Minutes of Personnel

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 8 June 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Bibby (Chair)

Councillors:

S Atkinson	D Peat
R Bennett	S Rainford
A Humphreys	J Schumann
D O'Rourke	G Hibbert

In attendance: Head of Human Resources, Director of Resources and Health and Safety Advisor.

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from the meeting were received from Councillor R Thompson.

61 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

63 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

64 APPOINTMENT TO WORKING GROUPS 2022/23

The Chief Executive submitted a report asking committee to consider the reappointment of the HR working group under the remit of this committee and decide upon the membership.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Approve the following working group and the membership for the 2022/23 municipal year

HR Working Group - Councillors S Bibby, D Peat, S Atkinson, A Humphreys, D O'Rourke, R Thompson.

65 EMPLOYEE ASSIST PROGRAMME

The Director of Resources submitted a report to Committee asking members to invest in an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for the Council.

The report explained that at the meeting of Committee on 17 March 2021 it was agreed that the 3 HR priorities for the Council for the next twelve months were:

- Recruitment and Retention;

- Health and Wellbeing;
- Training and Development;

It was intended that the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) would help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health and wellbeing. An EAP generally would include assessment, short-term counselling and referral services for employees, paid for by the employer.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

That members approve the purchase of an Employee Assistance Programme from People Asset Management.

66

ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Director of Resources presented a report that reviewed the Council's management of Health, Safety and Welfare over the period April 2021 to March 2022.

The report noted that all Heads of Service had successfully completed the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health's 'Managing Safely' training course and that this had provided an understanding of safety and health responsibilities in the Council.

Members were reminded that the Council's Health and Safety Policy had been reviewed and updated in line with changes to legislation and guidance and that the Council's Health and Safety Advisor had continued to provide information, advice, training and guidance to all sections of the Council.

The report noted that during the 2021-2022 period there had been 73 accidents, 19 of which involved staff, 47 at the pool and 7 involving a member of the public. In addition there had been 3 RIDDOR reportable accidents to staff.

A rise in the number of accidents this year compared to 2020/21 was reported. Slips, trips and falls had increased at the pool, and amongst staff, following the reopening of premises after the pandemic, and this would be monitored closely to identify any underlying causes for the increase.

The Council's Health and Safety Advisor attended and explained the key points in the report and answered questions from Councillors.

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MINUTES OF WORKING GROUPS

There were no minutes from working groups.

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REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

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EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next items of business being exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

GENERAL STAFFING UPDATE

The Director of Resources submitted a report informing members of general staffing matters since the last committee meeting. The report included information on appointments and resignations, internal movements, establishment changes, training and retirements.

The report noted that fifteen new staff had been appointed between 17 March 2022 and 15 May 2022 and that there had been four leavers, including one death in service, in the same period.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Note and approve the decisions taken by CMT and the Chairman as outlined in the report, and
2. Write letters of thanks to the staff who have left the Council, where appropriate.

REQUEST FOR HONORARIUM PAYMENT

The Director of Community Services submitted a report that Committee consider payment of an honorarium to a member of the Grounds Maintenance staff who had carried out extra duties arising from the vacant Head Gardener Post.

The factors to be considered when assessing the application were set out in the report. The report also noted that the Council's general terms and conditions of employment recognised that it was appropriate to recognise the contribution made by staff who cover the duties of another more senior post for more than 4 weeks.

It was estimated that the member of Grounds Maintenance staff had carried out 75% of the Head Gardner's duties therefore the report requested an honorarium of 75% of the difference in salary between the two posts totalling £691.98 gross payable.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

Agree to an Honorarium payment as set out in the report.

REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Committee to consider an application for flexible retirement from the Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive.

The report reminded Committee of the eligibility criteria under the Local Government Pension Scheme and detailed the Council's Early Retirement Policy.

The Chief Executive's recommendation was that the current post be changed to a part time job share post:

- i) 2½ days Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday am
- ii) 2½ days Wednesday pm, Thursday, Friday

The report noted that under flexible retirement there would be no pension strain cost on the council, and that agreeing to the request would have no impact on the service the member of staff provided and would provide some continuity when they retired fully in July 2025.

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approve the flexible retirement request with effect from 1 August 2022 subject to the successful appointment of a job share partner, and
2. Amend the establishment to make the Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive post job share with effect from the same date.

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ANNUAL ABSENCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Director of Resources submitted the Annual Absence Management Review for 2021/2022.

Members were reminded that the report is brought to the Committee on an annual basis and provides information and analysis on sickness during the year.

The report noted that the Council's Performance Plan has a target of 10 days absence per employee per year and that the Bradford Formula is used as a tool to identify staff whose level of absence is a cause for concern.

Members were reminded that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had affected the sickness absence data in many ways. Measures such as shielding, social distancing and increased homeworking would have had an impact on the overall levels of absence during the period. A Covid Working Group had been established to agree Covid risk assessments and had met on several occasions over the last two years. The Council had also taken a cautious and measured approach to lifting restrictions and returning to 'normal' and continued to encourage good hygiene.

The report provided a range of statistics and showed that:

- Overall absences had reduced significantly with the average number of days lost per employee reducing from 21.27 days on 2020/21 to 9.98 days in 2021/22.
- Non COVID-19 related absences amounted to 7.07 days lost per employee which represented a decrease from 11.66 days in 2020/21.
- Excluding COVID-19 related absences, long term absences accounted for 70% of the total days lost.
- Absence management remained a priority for the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Rebecca Tait rebecca.tait@ribblevalley.gov.uk.