

6 JUNE 2019

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HR COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held in the Committee Room 1, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 6 June 2019

* Cllr Barry Rickman (Chairman)
Cllr Mark Steele (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Hilary Brand
* Kate Crisell
* Michael Harris

Councillors:

* Maureen Holding
Mahmoud Kangarani
John Ward

*Present

Officers Attending:

Heleana Aylett, Debbie Bruton, Joanne McClay, Andy Rogers and Antony Whittle

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brand and John Ward.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2019 be confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised during the public participation period.

7 INTRODUCTION TO HR COMMITTEE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee noted its terms of reference as follows:

1. To advise the Council on the local pay and reward strategy for employees and their terms and conditions.
2. To make recommendations to Council on the Pay Policy Statement.
3. To receive regular updates on Health, Safety and Welfare of the Council's employees.
4. To respond on behalf of the Council to consultation papers on matters falling under the specific terms of reference of the Committee.

5. Subject to compliance with any provisions within legislation and the Council's Constitution, to delegate any of the functions of the committee to an officer of the Council.

The HR Committee would keep members informed on HR issues, receiving issues submitted by the Employee Side Liaison Panel relating to terms and conditions and would also receive comments from the latest Employee Forum meetings and meetings with union representatives. The Committee would, where necessary make recommendations to full Council.

HR Committee did not deal with individual issues relating to disciplinary or grievance matters or related appeals.

In answer to a question, it was estimated that approximately 20%-30% of the NFDC workforce were members of trade unions.

It was explained that, due to the low union membership, it had not been easy to engage with employee union representatives and therefore lately engagement had been with regional union representatives.

The Employee Forum had been one way to try and engage with employees who were not union members.

8 HR UPDATE

The Committee noted the HR Strategy for 2018-2022 which included an Action Plan as Appendix A which contained various measures to attract and retain employees and modernising the way we work.

The Pay and Reward update will be brought to each Committee meeting.

The Committee received an updated on various HR issues including the HR Action Plan and strategy and policies relating to employee wellbeing and sabbaticals.

It was noted that the Council had procured a new HR/Payroll system called iTrent which was to be used by all employees and elected members, including for claiming their travel allowances.

The Committee noted the Sabbatical Leave Policy at Appendix B to the report which allowed for a period of unpaid leave, subject to agreement of Service Managers and the Executive Management Team.

Members noted an Employee Wellbeing Policy which brought a number of existing and new initiatives together, including provision of information on the mental health first aiders within the Council.

The Committee also noted the Pay and Reward Work Programme at Appendix D, the content of which will be reviewed at the Employee Side Liaison Panel before recommendations were put to this Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9 HR METRICS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Committee noted trend data on various employee and workforce related issues. The metrics report had been used to compare data since 2017 and replaced the Annual Employee report. It covered areas such as:

- Total employee numbers
- Employee turnover
- Recruitment and retention
- Workforce data
- Gender pay gap
- Pay bill information
- HR case management
- Learning and development
- Work experience

The Committee also noted the related EMT and the Employee Forum and Employee Side comments together with the responses.

The Committee noted that the gender pay gap was closing with the standard mean male hourly rate of £11.94, compared with standard mean female hourly rate of £11.34, a pay gap of 60p which equated to 5%.

It was noted that there were recruitment and retention problems with the Council's HGV drivers. The Committee discussed various potential initiatives for recruitment and retention.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10 ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT

The Committee noted sickness absence trends and actions taken for the 2018/19 financial year.

The average days per full time employee had reduced from 11.69 in 2018 to 10.47 in 2019. The report covered the breakdown of sickness in short term and long term days per full time equivalent employees, days sick by service area, short term sickness reason by comparison and details of the Sickness Absence Action Plan.

A robust sickness absence procedure was in place which included return to work meetings and short and long term triggers. The Council also provided telephone help lines under the Employee Assistance Programme as well as flu jabs for operational staff and an offer of health checks. Mental health and employee wellbeing was a high priority area for assisting employees and there were a number of initiatives in this regard.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the sickness levels for 2018/19 and support the Action Plan outlined in the report.

11 EMPLOYEE AND PUBLIC ACCIDENT/INCIDENT STATISTICS

The Committee received details of accidents and incidents involving Council employees and members of the public from 1 April 2018 – 31 April 2019, and also comparing results with previous years to review the Organisation's performance.

On employee accidents and incidents, it was noted that 2018/19, a total of 192 accidents and incidents (near misses) were reported, a decrease of 67 from the previous year. Accidents were at their lowest level in seven years and vehicle incidents were at their lowest in five years. Leisure Centre accidents were at their lowest in nine years. Motor claim costs had been reduced £15,000 on previous years.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee note the positive health and safety performance;
- (b) That Service Managers be required to promote a strong health and safety culture through a continued drive of encouraging accident and near miss reporting, active monitoring and identification of trends. This will prompt the review of risk assessments and safe working methods;
- (c) That all employees should continue to work in a safe and responsible manner and bring to the attention of their line managers any health and safety concerns, accidents and near misses;
- (d) That all Managers should continue to promote the reporting of accidents/incidents, in particular to encourage near miss reporting; and
- (e) That measures to be introduced by all to reduce harm by continually implementing suitable control measures and improving working methods.

12 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**RESOLVED:**

That the following dates be agreed for future meetings of the HR Committee:

Thursdays at 9.30am

19 September 2019
30 January 2020
19 March 2020

CHAIRMAN