

11 JUNE 2020

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HR COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held on Thursday, 11 June 2020

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

Councillors:

- * Hilary Brand
- * Keith Craze
- * Kate Crisell

Councillors:

- Michael Harris
- * Maureen Holding
- * Mahmoud Kangarani

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Christine Ward

Councillors:

David Hawkins

Officers Attending:

Heleana Aylett, Bob Jackson, Zoe Ormerod, Andy Rogers, Karen Warner and Matt Wisdom

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020 were confirmed by the Chairman as correct record.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no issues raised in the public participation period.

31 HR UPDATE

The Committee received an update on HR matters since the last meeting. Issues discussed included:

- Investment in ICT facilitated working from home though some challenges as staff adapted.
- Preparation of ITrent performance module
- National Pay offer of 2.75% still under negotiation

- Furlough of 396 employees from 18 March to end of June
- Staff redeployments to temporary roles, such as food hub.
- Government guidelines / risk assessments for reopening information centres
- Engagement with the voluntary sector

Current guidance was to stay at home and it was anticipated staff would be required to work from home for some months to come.

Reference was made to the Government's homeworking tax relief of £6 per week, for additional household costs, available via HMRC.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32 ANNUAL SICKNESS REPORT

The committee received an update on the Council's approach to managing sickness absence, including trend data for the 2019/20 financial year.

It was noted that new sickness trigger points and the ability to work from home had a positive impact on the sickness absence figures.

The sickness figures were broken down by short and long term, reasons, and by service area.

Mental health and wellbeing measures were summarised in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the sickness levels for 2019/20 be noted and the action plan be supported.

33 EMPLOYEE SURVEY FEEDBACK

The Committee received a presentation giving an overview of the employee survey results.

480 employees (40%) had responded to the survey during March 2020 with a good split of office and operational staff, and male and female staff. The key findings were as follows:

- The vast majority of respondents had a good understanding of what was expected of them in their role and were aware of how their work impacted other service areas
- Awareness of the corporate plan varied across the organisation, particularly between office based and operational staff.
- The majority of staff felt valued in their work contribution
- Two thirds of staff reported that they understood the pay system, but there was evidence that many did not understand the reward system.

- The majority of staff felt that working from home had a positive effect on their productivity and work / life balance.
- Most staff felt they had the opportunity to discuss their learning and development needs with their managers.
- Two thirds of staff felt stressed at work sometimes or more frequently, which was more marked in office based staff. Over half the respondents rated the Council as a good or very good employer.

Each service manager had been given their specific service feedback and the overall results would be made available to the organisation.

It was felt the report was a thorough and positive one, but it was acknowledged that a further survey would need to be done to take account of home working under lockdown.

It was acknowledged that the survey had highlighted the need to enhance some aspects of management development, and an overall action plan would be produced. Certain issues would be fed into the appropriate recovery task and finish groups.

34 HR METRICS

The Committee received a report on HR statistics and trends relating to the workforce and associated issues.

The report set out:

- Total employee numbers
- Employee turnover
- Recruitment and retention
- Redundancy figures
- Gender pay gap
- Pay bill information
- HR case management
- Information on apprenticeships

Additional figures showing casual employee numbers were explained.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

35 EXIT INTERVIEWS - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update summarising issues raised during exit interviews (or leaver's questionnaires).

The questionnaires were emailed to leavers and returned. Any issues identified were pursued as appropriate. 98 questionnaires had been sent out and about half had been returned.

The questions asked included reasons for leaving, access to training, and how they rated NFDC as an employer. The Council scored 8 out of 10 as an employer.

CHAIRMAN