

11 JANUARY 2024

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HR COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held on Thursday, 11 January 2024

* Cllr Jill Cleary (Chairman)

* Cllr Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Mark Clark
* Keith Craze
* Kate Crisell
Sean Cullen

Councillors:

* Jeremy Heron
* Colm McCarthy
* Joe Reilly

*Present

Officers Attending:

Alan Bethune, Heleana Aylett, James Loring, Sophie Taylor and Karen Wardle

22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cullen and M Clark.

23 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

26 HR UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the activities of the HR service since the last HR Committee meeting, including the reactive caseload, and issues relating to job evaluations, restructuring advice, grievances, disciplinaries and sickness absence matters.

The report also covered:

- The Learning Management system
- Recruitment Update
- HR Peer Review
- Leadership Development Programme

- Wellbeing Update

It was highlighted that since April 2023, 7 visits had been made to local schools to raise awareness of NFDC as an employer, and there was evidence that this had already translated to applications.

Following feedback, improvements had been made to the Council's job application system to simplify the process, and a candidate pack was being developed.

The HR peer review had now been completed, and a report back would be made in response to points raised, which would shape the HR service for the future.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

27 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

The Committee considered the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.

The Pay Policy Statement was required by the Localism Act 2011.

The document set out the Authority's policies for the financial year, relating to the remuneration of its officers, and the relationship between various pay bands, with the related reasons. It also reflected any organisational changes and the consequences of the national annual pay settlement.

In response to a question, it was explained that job evaluations only tended to be undertaken where jobs had changed.

RESOLVED:

That it be a recommendation to the Council that the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 be agreed.

28 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

The Committee received the Council's Gender Pay Gap report for the period ending 31 March 2023.

Comparison data had been provided in relation to figures for March 2022. The available data for that point in time showed that the Median and Mean percentages of the Council's pay gap were lower than the comparators. Additionally, the percentage of males in the lower quartile was higher than those of the comparators, which could be due to not all comparators delivering an in house refuse service.

It was explained that direct comparisons with other authorities was not always timely, as organisations had a year to report their data and so this was not always available at the same time as NFDC reported theirs.

The Council would continue to keep under review its position in relation to gender pay.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

29 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

The Committee considered a proposed Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The Policy had historically been contained within the Council's grievance procedure, and the aim of the updated policy was to improve clarity on the Council's continued support, prevention, and procedure for managing these issues.

The Committee noted employee comments on the policy, together with related HR Team responses. Mandatory training on Dignity and Respect would be required to be undertaken every two years.

The policy would be reviewed by the HR Team every two years, including outcomes of formal and informal complaints, to ensure they were dealt with effectively and consistently.

Members were pleased to support the policy as submitted and felt it was very clearly written and presented.

RESOLVED:

That the Bullying and Harassment Policy be supported.

30 QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Committee received the Quarterly Health and Safety Report.

Members noted the significant work undertaken by the Corporate Health and Safety team, throughout the Council, from 1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023 (Q2).

Feedback was noted from the Safety Panels and Corporate Working Groups, together with the quarterly accident/incident report and details of all significant incidents. Members also noted the updated manual handling policy.

68 accident reports had been received in the last year with 144 days lost this financial year due to accident-related incidents, all from the operational side.

Two RIDDOR incidents had occurred in 2023, and related actions and learning had been implemented and training given in response.

The Committee were pleased to note the EMT responses to the report and actions arising.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the reviewed Corporate Manual Handling Policy be supported as updated; and
- (ii) That the contents of the report, including the accidents and incidents recorded in quarter 2, be noted.

CHAIRMAN