

**9 JANUARY 2025**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**HR COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held on Thursday, 9 January 2025

\* Cllr Jill Cleary (Chairman)

\* Cllr Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

Mark Clark

\* Kate Crisell

\* Sean Cullen

Jeremy Heron

**Councillors:**

\* Colm McCarthy

\* Alan O'Sullivan

Joe Reilly

\*Present

**In attendance:**

**Councillors:**

John Sleep

**Councillors:**

**Officers Attending:**

Alan Bethune, Heleana Aylett, Zoe Ormerod, James Loring, Jade Carter, Hardy, Laura Stead, Shannon Smith and Andy Rogers

**22 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mark Clark, Jeremy Heron and Joe Reilly.

**23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 were confirmed by the Chairman as correct record.

**24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**26 HR UPDATE**

The Committee received an overview of the work undertaken within the HR Service over and above the re-active casework.

The report contained updates on:

- Staff Engagement Survey,

- Recruitment,
- Learning Management System and
- Learning and Development,
- Management Development,
- LGBT+ Employee Network.
- Amendment to Equality Act 2010.

The Committee was pleased to note that 18 employees were currently undertaking apprenticeships and 40 staff had completed the management development course.

Members also noted the arrangements for buying and selling leave and the contribution it would make to recruitment and being an Employer of Choice.

It was explained that the improved % response to the Employee Survey was mostly likely due to the survey being run by an external organisation and the greater assurance on confidentiality.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**27 PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Committee considered the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

**RESOLVED:**

That HR Committee support the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 and recommend its approval by Council.

**28 SHORT AND LONG TERM SICKNESS POLICIES**

The Committee considered the revised short term and long term sickness policies which had been reviewed to ensure compliance with best practice and legal considerations in relation to all equality matters including disability and pregnancy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the attached policies be agreed and implemented with effect from 1st January 2025.

**29 GENDER PAY GAP**

The Committee noted Gender Pay Gap data for the period ending 31 March 2024.

The report gave comparative data with other authorities.

The report showed that that the Authority's gender pay gap had decreased, and overall, women earned 98p per £1 earned by men. It was noted that this compared well against other authorities, though not all had an in house waste service and other authorities had education and social services functions.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**30 EMPLOYEE WORKFORCE REPORT**

The Committee received the Employee Workforce Report which reviewed data from April 2023 – March 2024 and aimed to give an overview of key workforce data and the relevant trends in the Council's workforce priorities. The report also gave an overview of initiatives in place to support employees over the past 12 months.

It was noted that significant work had been undertaken to streamline the induction process and to ensure the right amount of knowledge was passed on at the right time. The Authority continued to invest in its employees through an increased corporate training budget by 8% for the 24/25 financial year.

Members were pleased to note the improvements to the recruitment portal, which now provided for uploading of videos, photos or documents to supplement applications.

Reference was made to the reported 28% of new starters who had left within the first 12 months of employment. It was noted that the HR team offered exit interviews and would review the induction process, and consider options to improve the induction experience. An update on these issues would be brought to a future meeting.

In reference to the section in the report that reported on the diversity of applicants continuing to increase and 17% being ethnically diverse in comparison to 13% the previous year, officers undertook to provide data to the member who had queried how these figures translated into successful applications in percentage terms.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the contents of the report and supports the priorities in 'next steps' section of the report.

**31 PEOPLE STRATEGY**

The Committee received a presentation on progress with the development of a People Strategy. The material from the presentation is included in the agenda pack.

The Strategy was being developed through research ('Discovery'), collecting evidence from internal and external sources. This led to the design stage and then identification of areas for improvement, and an action plan for delivery.

The Discovery exercise had revealed a number of positives, including good wellbeing support in the organisation, good cohesion within teams, and good line management support.

A number of areas had been identified to be addressed, including more diverse recruitment, learning and development and access to external funding, enhanced career paths to aid staff retention. Culture change, aspects of leadership and management were also highlighted, as well as consistent communications. The aim to become an Employer of Choice was also highlighted, together with the areas already in place and needing to be addressed for this.

The presentation set out various elements of the journey in fulfilling the Strategy including learning and development and competencies, reduction of silos and

working in partnership externally and in the community. Digital skills improvements and customer focus were also key. The Health and Wellbeing offer was also being reviewed.

Members felt the 'Sense of Belonging' was a strong sentiment in the presentation and relevant to employees, elected members and to the local community.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted, and the principles set out in the presentation be supported.

**32 QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

The Committee received the Corporate Health and Safety Report and the significant work undertaken in the last quarter.

Highlights included:

- A review of the Health and Safety Policy and related actions
- Health and Safety audits requirements
- Training requirement for managers
- Accident and Incident Reporting Policy
- Incident Report

Notable incidents related to verbal abuse and manual handling incidents, and Waste and Recycling was the highest reporting team.

It was noted that IT Hubs were being developed at depots to increase learning participation.

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the following be approved:

- (i) The Draft Corporate Health and Safety Policy.
- (ii) The Draft Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy.
- (iii) The recommendations under Health Surveillance Review.

(b) That the following be noted:

- (i) The recommendations under Keyhaven Report.
- (ii) The findings of the Depot Inspection & Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service audit.
- (iii) The findings identified from the service safety panels and working groups.
- (iv) The findings identified from the accident/incident report Q2 2024 – 2025.

**33 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee reviewed its future Work Programme.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Work Programme be noted.

**34 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**

CHAIRMAN