

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 2 December 2021.

PRESENT

Mr. L. Breckon JP CC (in the Chair)

Mr. P. Bedford CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mrs H. L. Richardson CC

Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

15. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

16. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

17. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

18. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

19. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

20. Staff Survey 2021.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources providing a summary of the outcomes and actions identified from the 2021 staff survey. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Members were advised that whilst participation was lower than for previous surveys, the overall results were generally positive, with some areas of concern which were currently being addressed.

In response to questions, members were informed that:

- i. Work had begun at a corporate and departmental level on the development of action plans to address areas of concern highlighted such as issues around stress, bullying and harassment, and lower levels of satisfaction amongst staff with disabilities.
- ii. Some of the more negative results could be a result of the pandemic and associated 'enforced' working from home arrangements. A more flexible approach to working which built on the current focus on staff wellbeing would be delivered through the Ways of Working programme.
- iii. Experience of bullying and harassment was a cause for concern. The survey did not differentiate between internal and external factors although this would be addressed through the action plan. Chief Officers had highlighted that policy and guidance in how to report and address bullying and harassment lacked clarity and this was being addressed. A zero tolerance statement was also being developed.

RESOLVED:

That the summary of the outcomes and actions identified from the 2021 staff survey be noted and to support the approach being taken to address the findings of the survey.

21. Innovating at Work.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided details of a Learning and Development programme that had been developed called Innovating at Work. This programme would both support and enable a culture of innovation to be further developed within the Council. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed of progress to date and of plans for a blended approach to learning delivered to staff. An innovation story on Public Health - Mobile Community Health and Wellbeing Support was presented to members.

Learning would be accessed via the Learning Hub and would include opportunities to engage with E-Learning, face-to-face learning and the ability to download other learning resources. Officers would consider making the training materials available for members to access.

RESOLVED:

That the work that has been achieved and the approach that has been developed to support innovation be noted.

22. Ways of Working Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on progress, decisions, and upcoming milestones of the corporate ways of working programme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Mr Breckon thanked officers for the comprehensive report and noted substantial projected resource savings.

In response to questions, the following points were raised:

- i. The programme would aim to deliver a blended approach to working where buildings would be used in a smarter way and where staff would work flexibly to deliver services most effectively. It was unlikely that staff would be fully remote as the best delivery of service required some office presence. However, arrangements would vary across services and staff would be given the opportunity to express their individual needs. It was noted that there was a benefit to certain roles being mostly remote as it enabled recruitment from a wider area.
- ii. The majority of County Council workplaces and offices were in scope for the project, which was focused on the better use of buildings. Consideration was also being given to how rental income could be maximised, particularly at County Hall. Staff needs would be addressed fully before any rental options were considered.
- iii. The new office model would be piloted in Room 700 of County Hall and findings would be used to shape development of the programme. Officers would provide an opportunity for members to view the pilot space.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of this report with a focus on the next steps which are aimed to drive improvements to the Council's ways of working and deliver on the benefits outlined in the report be noted.

23. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the current Action Plans which contained provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress made with their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the current Action Plans which contain provision for compulsory redundancy, and details of progress in their implementation, be noted.

24. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held on Thursday 3 February 2022 at 10:00am.