

## HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 4 October 2023

Present

Diamond (Vice-Chairman), Briggs, Coates, Richardson and Stone (Standing Deputy)

### 32 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Crellin and Councillor Payter.

### 33 Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 12 July 2023 be **APPROVED** as a correct record.

### 34 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests relating to matters on the agenda.

### 35 Equality Policy Review

An update was provided in respect of this item by David Fairall, Chief HR Officer and Caren Ransom, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser. This was a three yearly review of the Equality Policy. Minor amendments had been made to the Policy which adhered to the statutory and legal requirements placed upon the Council under the Equality Act 2010.

The following points were raised during this item:

- The subsequent action plan alluded to in the report, in the event the Policy was approved, would look at all the procedures which sit behind the contents of the Policy and include HR monitoring and reporting such as annual publication of the composition of the workforce and gender pay gap. Face to face training on equality and diversity would start next year with the emphasis previously having been on e-learning.
- The report template was being updated to reflect equality and diversity implications.
- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser now reported to the Chief HR Officer to take into account the overlap of equality and diversity matters and HR.
- The reference to the Equality Policy Review also covering councillors was welcomed.

**RESOLVED** that the revised Equality Policy 2023 be **APPROVED**.

### **36 Updates of HR Policies**

The Chief HR Officer introduced the item. He confirmed that in keeping with the Workplan presented at the previous meeting in July, this was the first phase of updating the HR policies to ensure they were within their published review dates and were legally compliant. The changes included the updating of the wording of the Grievance and Disciplinary policies as set out in the report and also out of date job titles.

In response to questions from Members of the Committee, the Chief HR Officer advised as follows:

- During a formal disciplinary process employees had a right to be accompanied throughout the formal disciplinary process by a trade union representative or workplace companion.
- The Council would consider a four day, thirty seven hour condensed working week in the event it was requested by an employee and this was already covered within the flexible working policy. However, there were no plans to introduce such working patterns as standard. Flexible working was offered to staff currently, including the hybrid arrangement of hours being worked in the office and also at home. Ms Ransom added that in providing the hybrid arrangement the Council had responded to staff requests, including in focus groups and surveys during 2021.
- As requested, Mr Fairall would look to provide statistics on flexible working for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the HR Committee **APPROVED** the proposed amendments to each of the eighteen policies set out in the report.

### **37 HR Workplan Update**

The Chief HR Officer provided a verbal update at the meeting. The key aspects he highlighted regarding progress on the HR Workplan, published at the previous Committee meeting in July 2023, were as follows:

1. Review the HR Team – In addition to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, an apprentice had also joined the HR Team. There was a current vacancy for a HR Payroll Advisor. It was expected that once the position was filled, the HR Payroll Advisor would help to work on bringing the HR administration and payroll function back under the Council's own control.

*Human Resources Committee (4.10.23)*

2. Creating a Plan – The HR Team had held two whole day sessions before the Summer. It was intended to bring a more detailed plan to the Committee in December.
3. East Hants Separation / Contracts – this had now been completed. Hireful, the recruitment portal was no longer a joint portal and the online Virtual College had been re-modelled. There would be less emphasis on e-learning. The job evaluation site had also been separated.
- 
4. Policy Review – Phase 1 of this process had been completed following the Committee's approval of the HR Policies updates. Phase 2 would involve reviewing the look and feel of policies. This would potentially include an online handbook.
- 
5. Performance Management – there was an interim process in place modelled on a more traditional approach. The aim was to evolve to a model of continuous feedback with managers, including training needs, rather than annually.
  - Mr Fairall assured the Committee that whilst the envisaged future process would be intended to be less bureaucratic, it would cover the times when performance management needed to be more formal and matters would be fully documented with HR's support.
6. Utilise the Apprenticeship Levy – it was noted that there was a new apprentice in Communications as well as HR. Other departments were also actively looking at this option. The relevant portal had been updated.
- 
7. Data Integrity and Management Information – The wider team now had access to the HR system, were able to run reports and provide data.
- 
8. Training and Development Plan – this was linked to the Corporate Plan and the Chief Executive's objectives. It was being progressed with the Chief Executive and the Operational Leadership Team. Further updates would be provided to the Committee.
- 
9. Review Payroll Provision – The Service contract was due to expire in 2025 and there would be a potential need to source a new HR system in 2024.

**RESOLVED** that the HR Workplan update be **NOTED**.

### **38 Additional Voluntary Contributions Progress**

The Chief HR Officer, in his verbal update, referred to the Committee's decision at the March 2023 meeting to implement a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (SCAVC) scheme for the Council's Local Government Pension

Scheme members. He advised that the pension scheme had been launched and in its second month, thirty five people had joined the SCAVC scheme.

The HR Team had arranged for Shaun Tetley, Head of Payroll, Pensions and Reward at Portsmouth City Council, who had addressed the Committee in March, to speak with staff about the SCAVC scheme both in June and at the beginning of October. Around fifty people had attended the in person sessions. He would also be providing an additional online session in November.

One hundred and five members of staff had signed up to the website in relation to the pension scheme and they would receive updates, including the webinars.

**RESOLVED** that the additional voluntary contributions progress update be **NOTED**.

**The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 5.55 pm**