

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Joint Human Resources Committee held on 13 July 2020

Present

Councillor Carter (Chairman)

Councillors

East Hampshire District Council: Councillors Standish, Budden, Burns and Glass
Councillors Smith K (Vice-Chairman), Branson, Crellin, Scott and Robinson

With Councillor Ken Smith in the Chair

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Lowe and Davies due to connectivity issues with Skype for Business.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Human Resources Committee held on the 16 October 2019 were agreed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had nothing to report at this time.

5 SENIOR PAY POLICY

The Head of Organisational Development opened the item.

In response to questions from the committee concerning the senior pay band scales, the Head of Organisational Development explained that the scale covered 15% above and 15% below the market rate, but the senior officer pay level for both councils are presently sat at 5% above the market average. These pay scales were also benchmarked against both public and private sector rates in order to give a competitive salary for prospective employees.

The Remunerations Panel was made up of the Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer and the Head of Organisational Development who looked at senior pay to make sure it is in line with the Senior Pay Policy.

The Head of Organisational Development also explained that the pay awards for the year 2020/21 were still being negotiated and so had not taken place yet.

The committee also noted that the report had concluded that performance related pay for senior members of staff was not workable for the councils, but welcomed the explanation that performance management was still undertaken for officers at all levels within the councils, not only for pay purposes but also to align the strategic direction for both councils.

The committee AGREED the recommendation to note the content of the report and approve the attached policy.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Head of Organisational Development opened the item.

Questions from the committee were primarily regarding the lack of mention about COVID-19 and the mental health of staff.

The Head of Organisational Development explained that the policy itself was an overarching mechanism for how health and safety impacted “business as usual”, and so did not have a section explicitly devoted to COVID-19. They did however assure the committee that home working assessments were taking place for all officers working from home during this time, and the office buildings themselves had undergone changes in order to accommodate health and safety regulations specifically for managing COVID-19.

The Head of Organisational Development and the Safety and Emergency Planning Officer both explained that the mental health of staff was absolutely a priority. There had been a wellbeing survey given to staff recently in order to gauge how officers felt they were coping, and a motivational speaker called Paul McGee had been brought in to the council for short sessions using Skype for Business, in order to help employees who felt they needed extra support to handle the uncertainties of the present time.

The Safety and Emergency Planning Officer also explained that whilst there were a number of physical first aiders required by law; the council also had volunteer mental health first aiders too who officers could go to if they felt they needed extra support. In this way the council had gone above and beyond the statutory requirements as an employer.

Other questions containing clarification on terms used in the policy were answered and explained.

The Safety and Emergency Planning Officer in response to questions explained that all staff who had disabilities or struggled to use the stairs had Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in order to help them out of the office building safely in the event of a fire or accident. They also explained that all agency staff, contractors and regular staff were given a building induction prior to receiving their access badges to the building and aimed to be given initial health and safety training within the first week of employment at both councils.

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Finally, a discussion concerning PPE as a result of the government's regulations was had. It was explained that all job roles which required PPE anyway as standard had enough to continue using, and whilst there was a national shortage of PPE the councils had enough in order to continue to function. This PPE did not need to come out of the budget as it was already accounted for.

The committee AGREED the recommendation to approve the H&S policy subject to the inclusion of the wellbeing strategy.

The Vice Chairman adjourned the meeting at 17:22 and recommenced at 17:24.

7 PAY POLICY STATEMENT - EHDC/HBC

The Head of Organisational Development opened the item by explaining the pay policy statement had to be published annually for all officers.

The committee queried why the two pay policy statements had not been aligned as a full alignment of both councils was the overall aim. The Head of Organisational Development explained that whilst Havant Borough Council's pay was dictated by the national pay negotiations, East Hampshire District Council's was sorted locally and so the two would have to have separate pay statements and could only be aligned as much as they could be. They had aligned the terms and conditions as much as possible in order to facilitate this.

The HR Business Partner explained that apprenticeship frameworks are different in accordance in what specialty area the apprenticeship resides in, for example the coastal framework would be different to the engineering framework etc.

Lastly the Head of Organisational Development explained that previously there had been an allowance granted to teams in order to help match up the pay divergence between East Hampshire and Havant, but the aligning of the pay scales undertaken recently had meant this was no longer necessary.

The committee AGREED the recommendation to approve the Pay Policy Statement for each Council, for approval at Full Council.

The meeting commenced at 4.15 pm and concluded at 5.46 pm

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Chairman