

MINUTES of a meeting of the **APPOINTMENTS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE** held on 1 July 2020

PRESENT

Councillor B Lewis (in the Chair)

Councillors R Ashton, K Buttery, A Foster, T Kemp, S Marshall-Clarke and P Smith

Officers in attendance – E Alexander, E Crapper, J Skila and L Wild

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor M Wall

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11/20 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

12/20 **COVID WORKFORCE INITIATIVES** On introducing this report, the Chairman wished to place on record his thanks to all the dedicated County Council officers and staff, some of whom had worked nearly 24/7 to pull all this together and maintain the hard work ever since. The skills, resilience and energy that they had shown had been amazing.

Since the end March 2020, interim guidance and dedicated workforce initiatives have been implemented for both managers and employees regarding the utilisation and wellbeing of our workforce in response to the Covid pandemic. During this period we have established additional regular engagement forums with trade unions, implementing a weekly strategic dialogue with regional representatives and branch secretaries and weekly interfaces with departmental representatives supported by Senior HR Business Partners.

Interim changes to workforce policy had been made at pace and in response to the Government announcements on lockdown from 23 March 2020. These changes had aimed to improve workforce flexibility, remaining under continual review, and included the following:

- Interim changes to the flexi-scheme to enable greater workforce flexibility.
- Updated guidance on annual leave and other leave provisions.

- Guidance on recording and payment during self-isolation and Covid-19 related sick absence, with SAP system changes to automate and support more accurate data recording.
- Interim Average Payments Policy for Relief Workers.
- Sent home protocols to provide clarity and guidelines where needed for employees who were unable to work from home.
- Co-ordinated employee testing referrals supporting managers to ensure symptomatic employees were referred for testing in the first 5 days.

Workforce surveys had been undertaken to enable greater understanding of our workforce ability and limitations, with both a health survey and skills and redeployment survey being conducted across all employees. This information had been utilised both within departments and centrally to support our overall workforce response, with particular focus on redeployment of our workforce to support critical roles.

A central internal Resourcing Hub has been implemented to provide a conduit to support resource utilisation and redeployment across all departments and in conjunction with partner organisations to support the wider system resource challenges. The Council had redeployed 379 employees across all departments into priority roles predominantly residing within Adult Social Care and Health.

Employee wellbeing had and continued to be crucial throughout the response to the Covid pandemic. A wellbeing system for employees which consisted of 5 levels of support had been implemented. Level 1 focused on general support through to more specific and specialist individual support at level 5. Details of the support provided at each level were presented.

From the outset of the pandemic, Health and Safety and Public Health colleagues had worked together to produce and amend PPE guidance in line with the national guidance. Alongside this the Council had established a PPE sub-group and a PPE ordering and distribution hub to ensure services were able to obtain the required PPE for employees. Initially emergency supplies of PPE were also provided to the PVI sector and Health partners where supply issues existed. Following initial issues with the availability and quality of some PPE items, the Council had managed these to ensure a continuous supply of PPE was available. The PPE sub-group had continued to liaise with the PPE distribution hub, Health and Safety and Public Health colleagues, issuing additional guidance where required. PPE stock levels were assessed on a daily basis and the quantities that establishments were able to order were adjusted accordingly. The PPE sub-group were also working closely with the Local Resilience Forum supply chain to access stocks where required.

The focus from a workforce perspective now focused on planning for organisational recovery and engagement with Trade Unions would continue

throughout this approach. Details were provided of the initiatives that were currently underway to ensure continual review of workforce initiatives as the pandemic evolved. This included reviewing all lessons learned to date regarding the workforce impacts and initiatives deployed as a result of the pandemic, considering where our people processes and policies could be amended going forward, whilst ensuring that we continued to align to national guidance as this evolved.

RESOLVED to note the progress in deploying the workforce initiatives outlined in the report in response to the Covid pandemic.

13/20 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the Committee's consideration of the remaining items on the agenda to avoid the disclosure of the kind of information detailed in the following summary of proceedings:-

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED AFTER THE PUBLIC HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING

1. To confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2020 (contains exempt information)
2. To consider the joint exempt report of the Executive Director Commissioning, Communities & Policy and the Director of Organisation & Development on the Creation of a Temporary Director, Economy, Transport & Environment (contains information relating to any individual)