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committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Scrutiny Committee meeting held at 6.00 pm on Tuesday, 17th September, 2024 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN.

PRESENT

Councillor David Hughes - In the Chair

Councillors: Peter Slack, Sue Bull, Gareth Gee, Laura Mellstrom, Roger Shelley and Nick Whitehead

Tommy Shaw (Democratic Services Team Leader), Lucy Harrison (Democratic Services Assistant), Deborah Unwin (Human Resources Manager) and Paul Wilson (Chief Executive)

Note:

"Opinions expressed or statements made by individual persons during the public participation part of a Council or committee meeting are not the opinions or statements of Derbyshire Dales District Council. These comments are made by individuals who have exercised the provisions of the Council's Constitution to address a specific meeting. The Council therefore accepts no liability for any defamatory remarks that are made during a meeting that are replicated on this document."

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor(s): Nigel Norman Edwards-Walker and Joanne Linthwaite

139/24 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

140/24 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Laura Mellstrom, seconded by Councillor Roger Shelley and

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 07 March 2024 be approved as a correct record, with an amendment to the resolution of minute item 355/23 to read '06 December 2023'.

Voting

05 For

00 Against

01 Abstentions

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

141/24 - INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

142/24 - FUTURE WORKFORCE FOR DERBYSHIRE DALES DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Chief Executive introduced a report which built upon the report considered by Scrutiny Committee in October 2023 and proposed options and potential solutions to the acute workforce challenges currently being experienced by the authority. The report provided short and long term options to improve the resilience of the Council's workforce and in particular the recruitment and retention of staff with appropriate levels of training and experience.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, local government and other public service providers, demonstrated a remarkable level of resilience, flexibility and adaptability in order to meet the needs of the crisis we faced. However, in the post Covid-19 era, local government faced a series of acute workforce challenges on a scale which had never before been experienced.

Maintaining sufficient capacity and skills, attractiveness as a career choice, competition from other sectors, flexible working arrangements and the continuous inflationary erosion of pay are all having a severe impact upon the ability of councils of all types and sizes to attract and maintain staff of the calibre required to deliver high quality services. It was noted that at the same time, there was a constant need to prioritise corporate projects and initiatives in order to ensure that the organisation's resources are aligned to efficient and effective service delivery.

Section 3 of the report outlined the Council's workforce profile as of August 2024. It was noted that 49% of staff were over the age of 50 and that there was a significant risk that the council would face the retirement of an increasing number of long serving, skilled and knowledgeable colleagues over the next 5-10 years.

Section 10 of the report outlined tactical and strategic measures in relation to recruitment and retention and set out recommendations for Members to consider and put forward for consideration by the Governance and Resources Committee. The recommendations as detailed in the report were discussed in detail and decided on as below.

Recommendation 1: Retain market supplements as part of the Reward and Recognition Policy, however in order to speed-up the process of recruitment, eliminate the requirement to have at least 2 failed recruitment attempts where CLT can agree there is reliable market intelligence / benchmarking information as a means of determining whether a supplement is necessary to recruit.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward. It was noted that there were concerns for existing staff affected by lack of resource caused by extended periods of recruitment.

Recommendation 2: (1) Retain welcome payments as part of our recruitment incentives package and increase the maximum payment to £5,000 and rely upon market intelligence / benchmarking information as a means of determining the level of payment to be made. (2) Welcome payments also to be repaid within an increased time of the first 3 years of appointment on a sliding scale.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and noted that for higher graded jobs and senior roles that receive larger welcome payments, the sliding scale should be longer.

Recommendation 3: Expand the number of career graded posts throughout the organisation (where necessary and desirable) in order to enable non-qualified or under-qualified staff to be recruited and trained, whilst also providing 'head-room' for career development and growth.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 4: (1) Increase the Vocational Training budget to £50,000 in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 to enable vocational training to be provided in areas of high priority (planning, finance, audit, legal, democratic services). (2) Employees to remain in the Council's employment for extended period 3 years post qualification or fees to be repaid on a sliding scale.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and suggested that the report submitted to Governance and Resources committee notes an estimation of how many employees would be undertaking training.

Recommendation 5: That authority be delegated to the Head of Paid Service to temporarily increase staffing resources (as proportionate and necessary) in order to enable the backfilling of a small number of posts each year to enable succession planning to take place.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 6: (1) That the Recruitment and Retention Reserve be utilised to meet the costs of sustaining an apprenticeship programme where existing budgets are unable to meet the full costs of salaries. (2) That an allocation of £5000 is made from the Recruitment and Retention Reserve to implement the 'Make a Difference' campaign in the Derbyshire Dales.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and requested that it is stated that the 'Make a Difference' campaign is a Local Government Association campaign.

Recommendation 7: That accelerated grade progression be permitted in career graded posts based upon an assessment of skills, knowledge, qualifications and operational need.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 8: That the District Council subscribe to the Infinistats service to enable regular programmed salary benchmarking to be undertaken.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 9: That consideration be given to amending the grade boundaries of Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward, noting that consideration should be given to removing the lowest grades on the pay spine.

Recommendation 10: That the job evaluation scheme be revised to enable the use of Grade 14.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 11: That consideration be given to the feasibility and affordability of a one-off enhanced pay award

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and requested that the estimated costs for this be presented to Members.

Recommendation 12: That consideration be given to options that recognise the amount of additional hours currently worked by some employees without pay or recognition and measures be introduced to recognise and compensate for 'lost' hours worked.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward. The Committee requested that the Constitution Working Group examine the terms of reference for meetings with a view to reducing the number of officers that attend meetings and the length of these meetings. It was also suggested that the start time of meetings be reviewed.

Recommendation 13: That consideration be given to the cost and feasibility of the development of an enhanced employee support and benefits package.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 14: That consideration be given to increasing the annual leave allowance by 1 day (for full time staff, pro rata for part time staff) to bring parity with other local Councils.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and requested that benchmarking against other local authorities is presented to the Governance and Resources Committee.

Recommendation 15: That consideration be given to the development and implementation of a scheme to enable employees to 'sell' a maximum of 5 days (full time staff, pro-rata for part time staff) annual leave back to the District Council commencing the annual leave year 2025/26.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 16: That as part of any enhanced employee benefits package, consideration be given to options for payment of 1 professional subscription for employees who are members of a designated list of relevant professional institute.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward and requested that estimated of the costs of this be provided.

Recommendations 17 and 18 were added in addition to the recommendations set out in the report.

Recommendation 17: That the Council builds relationships with local universities for recruitment purposes.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

Recommendation 18: That the Council investigates how Council and Committee meetings could operate more efficiently to reduce the amount of officer time spent at meetings.

The committee approved of this recommendation moving forward.

It was moved by Councillor Nick Whitehead, seconded by Councillor Sue Bull and

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. That Scrutiny Committee considers the options to address the workforce challenges identified in the report (Sections 10 and 11) and advises that the following measures progress for consideration by the Governance and Resources Committee:

- Recommendation 1: Retain market supplements as part of the Reward and Recognition Policy, however in order to speed-up the process of recruitment, eliminate the requirement to have at least 2 failed recruitment attempts where CLT can agree there is reliable market intelligence / benchmarking information as a means of determining whether a supplement is necessary to recruit.
- Recommendation 2: (1) Retain welcome payments as part of our recruitment incentives package and increase the maximum payment to £5,000 and rely upon market intelligence / benchmarking information as a means of determining the level of payment to be made. (2) Welcome payments also to be repaid with an increased time of the first 3 years of appointment on a sliding scale.
- Recommendation 3: Expand the number of career graded posts throughout the organisation (where necessary and desirable) in order to enable non-qualified or under-qualified staff to be recruited and trained, whilst also providing 'head-room' for career development and growth.
- Recommendation 4: (1) Increase the Vocational Training budget to £50,000 in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 to enable vocational training to be provided in areas of high priority (planning, finance, audit, legal, democratic services). (2) Employees to remain in the Council's employment for extended period 3 years post qualification or fees to be repaid on a sliding scale.
- Recommendation 5: That authority be delegated to the Head of Paid Service to temporarily increase staffing resources (as proportionate and necessary) in order to enable the backfilling of a small number of posts each year to enable succession planning to take place.
- Recommendation 6: (1) That the Recruitment and Retention Reserve be utilised to meet the costs of sustaining an apprenticeship programme where existing budgets are unable to meet the full costs of salaries. (2) That an allocation of

£5000 is made from the Recruitment and Retention Reserve to implement the 'Make a Difference' campaign in the Derbyshire Dales.

- Recommendation 7: That accelerated grade progression be permitted in career graded posts based upon an assessment of skills, knowledge, qualifications and operational need.
 - Recommendation 8: That the District Council subscribe to the Infinistats service to enable regular programmed salary benchmarking to be undertaken.
 - Recommendation 9: That consideration be given to amending the grade boundaries of Grades 4, 5, 6 and 7.
 - Recommendation 10: That the job evaluation scheme be revised to enable the use of Grade 14.
 - Recommendation 11: That consideration be given to the feasibility and affordability of a one-off enhanced pay award
 - Recommendation 12: That consideration be given to options that recognise the amount of additional hours currently worked by some employees without pay or recognition and measures be introduced to recognise and compensate for 'lost' hours worked.
 - Recommendation 13: That consideration be given to the cost and feasibility of the development of an enhanced employee support and benefits package.
 - Recommendation 14: That consideration be given to increasing the annual leave allowance by 1 day (for full time staff, pro rata for part time staff) to bring parity with other local Councils.
 - Recommendation 15: That consideration be given to the development and implementation of a scheme to enable employees to 'sell' a maximum of 5 days (full time staff, pro-rata for part time staff) annual leave back to the District Council commencing the annual leave year 2025/26.
 - Recommendation 16: That as part of any enhanced employee benefits package, consideration be given to options for payment of 1 professional subscription for employees who are members of a designated list of relevant professional institute.
 - Recommendation 17: That the Council builds relationships with local universities for recruitment purposes.
 - Recommendation 18: That the Council investigates how Council and Committee meetings could operate more efficiently to reduce the amount of officer time spent at meetings.
2. That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Council's Governance and Resources to formally consider the options identified by the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

The Chair declared the motion **CARRIED**.

18:16 – Councillor Whitehead entered the Meeting.

143/24 - UPDATE - FLOODING SCRUTINY EXERCISE

The Chair provided Members with a verbal update on the Flooding Scrutiny Exercise. It was noted that no progress had been made since the last meeting of the Committee on 7th March 2024, due to staff resources. This was also the case for the consultation and engagement exercise.

The minutes of the previous meeting called on Members of the Committee to arrange a working group to make proposals for a report which would recommend a course of action. The Chair informed Members that he would write to the relevant stakeholders referenced in the minutes for both of these exercises with a view of reporting back to the next committee meeting.

144/24 - SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Chair presented the current Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2024/25. It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would address the corporate plan and enhancing staff recruitment and retention policies and practices.

Councillor Sue Bull noted that Officer time was limited, and a review could be undertaken into how this time could be used more efficiently. Councillor David Hughes requested that Councillor Bull write up a proposal regarding this to present to the committee.

Members agreed that there was no need to add any further topics to the work programme at present.

Meeting Closed: 8.15 pm

Chair