

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – Human Resources Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016

Present:

Councillor Ollerhead – In the Chair
Councillor Connolly

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources

Chelsea Tindall - Health and Social Care based in Supported Accommodation

Millie Sutton - Customer Services based in Libraries

Christos Michaelas - ICT Graduate apprentice based in ICT

Kemar Gyles - Horticulture based in Grounds Maintenance

Neko Akoya - Horticulture based in Growth & Neighbourhoods

Soha Hassan Hashmi - Business Admin based in Legal.

Apologies: Councillor Russell

FS/HS/16/08 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2016 as the correct record.

FS/HS/16/09 Talent Management

The Subgroup received a report of the Interim Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD) which set out the Council's current approach and future thinking in terms of the management of workforce talent and how this will support the emerging 'Our People' Strategy. The Subgroup welcomed a number of apprentices who had been invited to the meeting to share their experiences. The Equalities Team Leader introduced the apprentices advising that they represented all directorates across the Council and included graduate apprenticeships. She praised their work adding that Milly in libraries had recently been nominated as a 'Rising Star' in the Council's Awards for Excellence scheme. She asked each apprentice to say a little about themselves and their role.

Soha explained she worked in the Council's legal service department at St Peters House, mainly dealing with prosecutions but also communications and employment. She was currently studying for an administrative qualification level 3 one day per week and met with her tutor every 2 months. Chelsea explained she was support worker in Chorlton, training to support people with mental and physical disabilities. She was studying for a health and social care qualification level 2. Millie was working in customer services and studying for her NVQ level 2. Neko was working at Grinshaw Lane cleaning up green areas, litter shrubs and general maintenance, operating machinery. Neko advised he had not started college yet but would be commencing a level 2 in Horticulture shortly. Kemar said he worked alongside Neko based in the Grounds Maintenance Team. Christos was a graduate management

trainee with a degree in digital technology. He was currently working alongside engineers on the Public Service Network (PSN) compliance project and monitoring of the IT environment.

Members thanked the apprentices adding that they should be proud of their achievements. The Interim Head of HROD advised that all of the apprentices were Manchester residents and brought something fresh to the Council. He added that part of the Council's Talent Management Strategy was increasing the number of apprentices. The Chair said that he would like to know more about their experiences from start to finish and how accessible the Council was.

An apprentice whose training had been subject to delay explained this was due to a change to her external assessor and had now been addressed. One apprentice had not started his training yet as he was still deciding which course was most appropriate for him. Most apprentices had positive experiences of training and reported that they were given time away from work to pursue this. The Interim Head of HROD assured members that a number of training contracts were in place and appropriate checks and balances carried out. He added that the Council was keen to develop its employees and 80% of the current years Learning and Development budget was committed spend.

The Chair asked about the support available from line managers, how frequently this was provided, and the level of support available. One apprentice advised she had two managers, one of which was more supportive than the other. She said she was aware she should receive monthly reviews but one of her managers did not know this. Other apprentices reported they had regular reviews. Another apprentice said that everyone in her department was very helpful and she felt like any other employee. A member asked whether reviews were sometimes carried out informally. One apprentice said that whilst her manager was always approachable when in work she didn't have regular appraisals or 1:1s at the moment as her manager was absent from work through illness. The Chair noted that management inconsistency was a problem and sought assurance that appropriate support would be put in place. The Interim Head of HROD agreed adding that management consistency was being addressed through the new 'People Strategy'. He added that additional resources were being allocated so a single point of contact within HR regarding apprentices would be made available in the New Year.

One apprentice said that a vacancy a few grades higher than his current grade had arisen in his department but he was told he could not apply as he was only an apprentice. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources stressed that apprentices should receive the same level of support as graduate trainees and should only be restricted by the limits they set for themselves adding that he had started his career digging roads. He said it was important that all staff were given training and development opportunities that enabled them to progress in the direction they wanted. The Equalities Team Leader advised she would take this issue up with the apprentice and their manager outside of the meeting.

Members discussed the quality of apprenticeships noting that in the past some organisations took on apprentices but did not give them quality jobs to do or help them to progress. The Head of HROD Service Delivery explained that Council

apprentices were placed in real jobs and the apprenticeship package was wraparound support. He reported that discussions were ongoing at a Greater Manchester level to develop a regional apprenticeship scheme. The Interim Head of HROD agreed that real jobs were more helpful and brought talent that contributed to the Council business.

Members discussed how apprentices could be rewarded and learn from each other. A member suggested they be brought together at the end of their apprenticeship to share experiences, celebrate achieving their apprenticeship, and for the Council to give them recognition to which the Chair and the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources agreed.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources said that it would be useful for the Subgroup to review the experiences of the same group of apprentices attending today when their current apprenticeship ended to measure the support they had actually received to which the Subgroup agreed. The Chair added that this was not to give preference to this group but to compare their experiences with the support available generally. He added that since it was a government requirement to employ more apprentices future reports were needed on this and the progression of all apprentices within the organisation.

Members discussed the difference between the Council apprenticeship scheme and apprenticeships offered by Council contractors. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources described the work of the Council's procurement team and the role of the Ethical Procurement Task and Finish Group in requiring more contractors to have regard to Social Value and the Council's increased Social Value weighting of 20%. He added that apprenticeships with Council contractors should receive a similar offer and he was exploring how this could be ensured. He described how the 'Our Manchester' strategy encouraged more to be done by communities and said that he was exploring how Community Groups could be encouraged to take on more apprentices also. Members noted that the refurbishment of the Town Hall would require contractors to take on many apprentices and asked about the roles that would be available including craft apprentices. The Interim Head of HROD said that he was working closely with the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) to explore this. He added that most building works would not commence until 18 months time and consideration was needed as to developing a long term strategy for how those skills developed by apprentices could be used in future.

The Chair asked how the Council would meet the requirements of the new targets for increasing its numbers of apprentices. The Interim Head of HROD advised that the Council had an ageing workforce and consideration was given to projected turnover and growth areas for example health and social care integration. A member noted that the current strategic workforce planning data was limited. The Chair stressed that in this context it was important to get apprentices' career progression right. The Equalities Team Leader added that apprenticeships were available at a range of grades throughout the Council and were not restricted to entry level jobs. The Interim Head of HROD confirmed that apprenticeships were also available to existing Council employees and could be 12, 14 or 16 month programmes.

Members discussed the apprenticeship levy and asked for clarification on how this would work in practice. The Interim Head of HROD advised that loose criteria of what it could be used for was in place e.g. away days, qualifications, and career development but that we did not have to bid for this and there was a maximum that the Council contributed. Members were keen that the Council ensured it used a similar amount as to what it had contributed. The Chair asked that officers investigate whether this could also be used to cover the administrative costs of running apprenticeship schemes.

Members discussed internship schemes and the Chair was keen that these be developed in parallel with apprenticeships. The Interim Head of HROD advised that he would draft a new programme for internships and advised that discussions had been held with Universities but the priority was apprenticeships in terms of skills, pay and jobs. The Chair asked for a future report on internships at an appropriate time.

Members discussed career progression and the introduction of job families. The Head of HROD Service Delivery advised that a range of jobs had been broken down into their component parts, to drive workforce planning and to consider career progression/pathways. He advised that this was promoted via the intranet, appraisals and 1:1's. Members asked that officers ensure employees without ICT access were aware. A member said that all staff should have access to ICT in work time to which the Chair agreed. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources agreed saying that he wanted to ensure ICT was available at all work locations. He said that lack of ICT skills would not prevent someone getting a job with the Council and the Council would support them to develop basic ICT skills to ensure they could utilise this resource.

Members discussed the work around leadership and management. The Chair noted that the Council prioritised its investment into those either at entry level or at grades 10 and above and sought assurance that all employees received support and recognition. In particular he requested further information on those employed at Grades 4,5,6, and 7 as those grades could also have management responsibilities. The Chair added that it was important the Council responded to the views of all employees and requested that the BHeard survey be made mandatory in future.

Decisions:

1. To thank apprentices for attending the meeting and sharing their experiences
2. To request that the Interim Director of HROD organise an event for apprentices to share experiences, and to celebrate and gain recognition from the Council for their achievements. To recommend that the Leader and the Chief Executive be invited to attend.
3. To request a future report on apprenticeships and invite the same group of apprentices when this is considered.
4. To note that the Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources is investigating how the Council can ensure that those on apprentices with Council contractors receive a similar offer to Council apprentices; and how Community Groups can be encouraged to take on more apprentices.
5. To request that officers explore how the apprenticeship levy can be maximised and investigate whether this can be used to cover the administrative costs of

operating apprenticeship schemes.

6. To request that the BHeard survey be made mandatory in future years to maximise the response rate and to ensure the Council is listening to all of its employees.
7. To request that officers promote ICT access to all staff.
8. To request a future report on internships at an appropriate time.

FS/HS/16/10 Recruitment and Selection

The Subgroup received a report of the Interim Director of HR and OD which sought views of Members on the development of the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy and Guidance for Managers. Once finalised and approved it is intended that this policy will replace the Recruitment and Selection Best Practice Handbook approved by Personnel Committee on the 20th February 2003. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources introduced the report, apologising for its late submission noting that he had a number of concerns which officers were now working to address.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources said that he wanted the policy to be more explicit in encouraging specific groups representative of residents in the City to apply for Council recruitment opportunities and in outlining the support the Council offered to those groups. The groups included Looked after Children (LAC), people with disabilities, people from black and minority ethnic communities (BME), ex armed services personnel, and the homeless. He added that whilst he supported the Council's current recruitment policy in respect of entry level grades being restricted to Manchester residents; he also wanted to encourage Manchester residents to apply for opportunities at all grades and for this intention to be promoted. He added that the residency criteria in respect of graduate trainees also needed to be clarified in that it applied to Manchester residents attending University, not purely those attending a Manchester University. He added that employee interests needed to be incorporated in addition to member interests which were outlined in the constitution. The Interim Head of HROD advised he was supportive of the Executive Members' comments some of which were being addressed in the People Strategy which would be submitted to Personnel Committee and a future meeting of the Subgroup.

Members agreed to re-consider the policy further at a future meeting. The Chair noted that it would not be possible to consider this in the meeting planned for March and requested that an additional meeting be arranged to discuss the policy further once appropriate revisions had been made.

Decision:

To request the policy be re-submitted to an additional meeting of the HR Subgroup to be scheduled in February 2017.

FS/HS/16/11 Workforce Equality

The Subgroup received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People Policy and Reform) which provided an update on activity in relation to the organisation's

continued commitment to workforce equality. The report also highlighted those areas for improvement identified through the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) assessment in relation to the workforce, and sets out the Council's progress to address these.

The Chair said next time this issue was considered he would like to invite members of the Council's Staff Groups to the meeting to talk about their role. Officers advised that in addition to the current staff groups for Disability, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT), a fourth staff group was being established for young people for those employees aged 18-29.

The Chair commented that the collection of equality monitoring data could be promoted by combining this with the BHeard survey. Whilst he accepted that employees could not be forced to provide equality monitoring data combining the two could increase response rates. Members discussed the purpose of the data collection and how it was used to drive Council policy. The Interim Head of HROD said that the information was used as a reference point to check for bias, and explained the role of staff groups which included ensuring that any Council proposals did not adversely impact on specific groups.

Decisions:

1. To request a future update at an appropriate time and to invite Employee Groups when this is considered.
2. To request that the collection of Equality Monitoring Information be combined with the BHeard Survey to improve response rates.

FS/HS/16/12 Human Resources (HR) Review

The Group received an oral update from the Interim Head of HROD regarding the HR review. The reports of the external consultants had been circulated to members following the previous meeting of the Subgroup.

The Interim Director of HROD advised that workshops were being run to design the future operating model commencing in December 2016. He described activity around a number of recent developments including a workforce development framework, e recruitment system, the job evaluation of senior managers, and the support offered by HR to health and social care integration. He added that further developments were planned but dependent on ICT.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources praised the work of the HROD department commenting on the pace and scale of change. The Chair agreed on the importance of both HR and ICT particularly at a time where the Council's budget was severely restricted due to a reduction in government funding.

The Chair requested that a substantive report on the HR review be brought to the next meeting of the Subgroup.

Decisions:

1. To note the oral update
2. To request a report on the HR Review be provided to the next meeting of the Subgroup.

FS/HS/16/13 Work Programme

Decisions:

1. To agree the work programme subject to the additions and amendments agreed at this meeting
2. To request that Scrutiny Support arrange an agenda setting meeting with the Chair, the Interim Head of HROD and the Head of HROD Service Delivery to review the work programme further