

Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee – Human Resources Subgroup

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2017

Present:

Councillor Ollerhead – In the Chair
Councillor A. Simcock

Councillor Flanagan, Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources
Councillor Newman, Executive Member for Children's Services

FS/HS/17/01 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 as the correct record

FS/HS/17/02 Employment Policy - Recruitment and Selection

The Director of HR/OD introduced the report.

A member asked how useful the Manchester residency criteria discussed in the report were and if they could be used effectively. In response the Director of HR/OD said that it was useful but that it was a signifier as opposed to a deliverer of change and was dependent upon the correct policies and frameworks. She said that the workforce plan was in place, but that further work needed to be conducted regarding the apprenticeship levy.

A member asked if the ideas outlined in the report would be embedded in the next large scale phase of recruitment into MCC. In response the Director of HR/OD said yes, but that the types of roles MCC would recruit would be changing, and as such this policy needed to be developed and continue to evolved.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that MCC is not recruiting enough graduates and apprentices into the organisation. He also commented that MCC needed to understand the economic dynamics that led people who have jobs to move out of the city, but that Manchester residents needed to be prioritised.

A member asked what the policy was regarding leaving MCC via voluntary redundancy, and if this could be linked to MCCs other organisational bodies such as Manchester Airport. A member followed by commenting that the government had made it clear that following voluntary redundancy no other public sector jobs should be taken by individuals. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that this was particularly worrying when individuals will return to the organisation as consultants or private sector contracts after taking redundancy packages.

In response the Director of HR/OD said that it is impossible in law to impose this, but that this should be an aspirational organisational standard. Members responded that they would like HR/OD to consider these issues. The Head of HR/OD Service Delivery commented that since 2011 MCC had maintained a policy of not re-engaging staff who have taken voluntary redundancy or retirement packages for 2 years, either as contractors or vendors.

Decision

1. To note the report
2. To recommend HR/OD explore MCCs policy on employment following voluntary redundancy in other public sector jobs.

FS/HS/17/03 Human Resources (HR) Review

The Director of HR/OD introduced the report. She highlighted communication as a strong theme that needed improvement, and informed the Subgroup that HR were about to go live with a new intranet page. Speed of delivery was also a key theme. A number of work streams had also been developed to improve HR governance.

A member asked if the Director of HR/OD was confident that the new applicant tracking system would increase managers' control in the recruitment process. In response the Director of HR/OD commented that recruitment is a processes which needed to be bottomed, and that the recruitment tracking system was a key part of enabling line managers to recruit independently. The Head of HR/OD Service Delivery commented that the new system had radically simplified the recruitment process for managers in line with their requests.

The Chair commented that there was little in the strategy regarding development below grade 10 staff, and that this was not in line with the Our Manchester approach. In response the Head of HR/OD commented that this was good feedback, and commented that more needed to be done to make the training offer equitable across the organisation.

The Chair asked if the B-heard survey could become a mandatory part of council officers jobs, and if feedback to managers could be strengthened. In response the Director of HR/OD said that strengthening staff engagement was part of the B-heard action plan, that B-head follow up talks are being considered, and that discussions with communications were underway to ensure a clear narrative is spread to staff.

Decision:

1. To note the report
2. To recommend HR/OD explore more development opportunities for staff below grade 10.
3. To recommend HR/OD explore making filling out the B-Heard survey part of employee contracts/.

FS/HS/17/04 Managing Attendance

The Director of HR/OD introduced the report. Overall the report presented a positive story from the previous year, but MCC was still not performing as well as it should and should be driving for attendance to be higher. She commented that mental health needed to be focused on as a cause of absence, and to focus on how attendance results from good management. She commented that more needed to be done with the prevention agenda and improving employee health and wellbeing, including strengthening peer led groups to improve the quality of working life. The Deputy City Solicitor outlined that there are various corporate wellbeing activities offered in Legal services such as a running club, yoga sessions, mindfulness group and quire, all of which were popular.

A member asked if there was a robust answer to be provided for the estimated £4-6 million lost in productivity annually, which although is an improvement on previous years was a large loss. In response the Director of HR/OD said that these figures were debatable as a measure of productivity, but that it was a major issue. A member asked why MCC on average sees noticeably more days lost than private sector organisations. In response the Director of HR/OD said this came down to culture and leadership, stating that it was often easier for employment contracts to be terminated in the private sector.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented that it was positive to have seen workplace satisfaction improve in Children's services, commenting that this was the result of caseloads for social works which had gone from over 30 on average to just under 20 cases. As well as this she cited better management, effective supervision and more financial investment in the service. The Chair commented that Children's services presents a great case for increased investment to tackle this issue.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that the B-heard survey clearly showed that the organisation is not connecting with staff, and ask that the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee consider this issue. He commented that universal access should be granted as part of the contract for staff. He commented that there could be more of a push towards flexible working, which could include weekends and later in the evenings if people chose. He commented that he would like the Resources and Governance Scrutiny to consider pay for lower grade workers. He commented that some expert testimony regarding stress would be useful for the Resources and Governance Scrutiny to consider. The Chair responded that they would look at putting these topics to the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee, as well as provision for simple facilities such as a canteen, hot drinks and breakout areas.

The Chair commented that they would like more brought back to the committee regarding return to work interviews, commenting that he believed more could be done regarding resolving issues for members of staff. The Chair asked that another audit of return to work forms be carried out in 6 months time. The Head of HR/OD Service Delivery commented that for 2016/2017 the corporate compliance of return to work forms was 89%. He also commented that work was underway at exploring a

more user friendly process for recording absence and marking returns to work, citing problems with the SAP system.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that return to work is a legal requirement and needed to be carried out consistently. He also commented that managers have struggled to deal with mental health issues, and that expert advice was required on these issues. An officer responded that more training is required for managers to have conversations about mental health with employees.

Decision:

1. To note the report
2. To recommend HR/OD review the use of the B-Heard survey.
3. To recommend HROD provide a further report on return to work policy.
4. To recommend HROD conduct an audit of return to work forms within 6 months.

FS/HS/17/05 For Information: People Strategy

The Director of HR/OD introduced the report. She commented that the strategy required further development in regards to embedding Our Manchester Behaviours. She also commented that there was more work to be done in relation to soft skills development, and that data needed to be used in a more constructive way. The Chair commented that it was essential that managers had soft skills training.

The Chair asked how Listening in Actions Sessions were going to be reported back to the HR Subgroup. In response the Head of HR/OD Service Delivery commented that there was a metric that looks at the proportion of staff engagement with these sessions.

The Chair commented that they would like to see a meet and greet organised between Graduates, Apprentices and the new Chief Executive. The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that more work needed to be done regarding the integration of graduates and apprentices into the organisation, as well as to develop their own networks.

The Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources commented that their needed to be more work regarding staff volunteering, and putting in systems to allow staff to volunteer in line with Our Manchester. The Head of HR/OD commented that this was being reviewed as part of updating the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and that there would be a full review of volunteer policy taking place in the next three months.

Decision:

1. To note the report
2. To recommend HR/OD organise a meet and greet session for graduates and apprentices with the chief executive.

FS/HS/17/06 Work Programme

The Subgroup considered the work Programme.

Decision:

To Approve the Work Programme