

MINUTES

Employment Committee

Wednesday, 21 September 2022, 10.00 am

Council Chamber – South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Sarah Trotter (Chairman)
Councillor Anna Kelly (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor Annie Mason
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Helen Crawford

Officers in attendance

Karen Bradford (Chief Executive)
Alan Robinson (Deputy Chief Executive)
Fran Beckitt (HR Manager)
Jane Jenkinson (Senior HR Officer)
Mieke Alcock (HR Officer)
Georgia Davis (HR Officer)
Sarah Downs (Democratic Officer)

9. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Adam Stokes.

Councillor Helen Crawford was a substitute.

10. Disclosure of interests

There were none.

11. Minutes of the meeting held on:

9 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

28 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

15 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

12. Updates from the previous meeting

The HR Manager informed Members of the Committee that the action from the meeting of 15 June 2022 will be presented in the format requested at the meeting scheduled on 16 November 2022:

'In future information in respect of disability, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation to be listed with numbers rather than shown in a pie chart'

13. Pay Review Update

Councillor Mason, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities introduced the pay review update report, summarising that since the previous update, noted by the Employment Committee on 9 March 2022, a number of actions had been completed which included:

- An Equality Impact Assessment on the scope of the Pay Review.
- Setting up of a Pay Review Working Group to develop proposals. Separate sub- groups were also to be set up to look at each of the four areas of the Pay Review Scope.
- Details of the pay review and its proposed scope had been communicated to the Trade Unions through the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee meetings which are led by Chief Executive.
- An action plan had been developed to deliver the scope of the Pay Review.

The Senior HR Officer gave a further update on the report and informed Members about the use of career grades to attract the best staff to the Council and the provision of development opportunities and progression to develop and retain talent. Work was underway with the pay review sub-group to ensure a career grade procedure that enabled equity and consistency across the Council as well as a review of the lower range of pay grades based on the Real Living Wage rate, due to be announced on 22 September 2022.

With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1925 was offered for all National Joint Council pay points 1 and above. The Officer continued that the Council usually

aligned pay deals to the national agreement and have modelled removing the lowest scale points in order to create more differentiation between grades in the bottom scales and analysis of similar roles has been undertaken to identify any inconsistencies between pay grades. The job evaluation process was being updated however this would not have budgetary implications.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Although the pay deal had not yet been agreed, it was clearly going to be a significant cost.
- Attracting good local talent was an issue due to a gap in the market.
- The scheme to attract apprentices and graduates was to be encouraged. Referred to as a 'grow your own' method It was considered as a way of attracting loyal, long-serving staff and promoting a career in Local Government.
- It was acknowledged that the addition of pay supplements in some sectors by neighbouring Local Authorities meant competition made recruiting more difficult.
- How far along was the job evaluation process?
- Was there regular consultation with trade unions during the updating of processes?
- Did apprentices qualify for the Real Living Wage?
- The review must include paternity leave when considering impact.

The Senior HR Officer confirmed that any new roles will from now on go through the updated evaluation process.

The HR Manager informed the Committee that meetings were held on a monthly basis with trade unions and they were in agreement nationally. The lowest pay scale points were to be removed or increased to adhere to legal requirements and the Real Living Wage. The Officer explained that the national minimum wage for apprentices was being reviewed. The Council was looking to offer a scheme where apprentices can work within a number of different departments to gain more experience.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that the modelling was not yet complete on this scheme as cost of living negotiations were still taking place so the exact cost could not be stated at this stage. The review was focused on growing and retaining talent through providing opportunities and development.

AGREED:

That the Employment Committee:

- a) **Noted the update of the Pay Review based on the agreed scope of the review.**

14. Corporate Values Update

Councillor Mason, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities introduced the corporate values update report. The Committee was informed that a third People Panel meeting had taken place on 2 August 2022 which involved 25 Officers from teams across the Council, where a refresh of the Council's corporate values was launched. The feedback indicated that colleagues did not always relate to the values that should be a fundamental part of the organisation's identity so an organisation-wide employee-led approach has been undertaken.

The HR Manager summarised that the current corporate values are being reviewed. As well as having formed a People's Panel, they looked at other organisations and their values, for example, the NHS, and Facebook.

The Officer confirmed that feedback received will be used to start identifying what the new corporate values could be with the aim of making a difference. Member involvement in the process was to be welcomed as a key part of the Council with contact and ideas on our community needs. A 'values workshop' with the Employment Committee could be part of the process.

The Chairman agreed that the Councillors wanted to make a difference and welcomed the chance to be involved.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- Were corporate values to fit in with the corporate plan?
- The focus needed to be on the people in their jobs, values should be employee-led and be meaningful to them.
- How was networking a value?
- Were all employees aware of the process?
- How do the residents engage with the process?
- Values and culture were connected and affected by the work-from-home behaviours.
- All Members should be invited to be involved in the workshops.

The HR Manager confirmed that the corporate values were not completely resonating with employees yet and they needed to be built into our processes as well as ensuring they were relevant. This would support the Council to increase the retention of staff. Engaging with and involving residents was to be the next stage in the process.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that it was the behaviours that affect the corporate values and in turn, the corporate plan. Networking was a behaviour to support the value of working together and supporting each other.

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED:**

That the Employment Committee:

- a). **Noted the update on South Kesteven's corporate values.**
- b). **Advised how the committee and councillors would like to be involved in the development of the new corporate values by agreeing that all Members will be included in the workshops.**

15. Induction Update

Councillor Mason, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities introduced the induction update and asked that the Committee noted the report.

The HR Manager summarised that the induction process was an opportunity for South Kesteven District Council to welcome new recruits, help them settle in and ensure they had the knowledge and support they needed to perform in their role. Feedback from recent starters and the People Panel indicated there was an opportunity to improve the process for our new starters. The feedback particularly highlighted that new recruits did not feel they necessarily got to know about the wider Council and what other teams do. New initiatives included a meeting at 3 months with a member of HR to support and answer any questions and concerns.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- The new initiatives were welcomed
- Was there IT support around the e-learning package?
- What was involved in the Team SK quiz?
- With homeworking being a large part of the culture, how were new starters made to feel like part of the Team?
- Were new starters informed about Trade Unions?

- In the past, new starters had been shown the Council Chamber and how Democracy informs the running of the organisation.
- Members were inspired to see the real effort to get employees together and connected
- The HR Manager was congratulated on their leadership

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Committee that the induction process had evolved over time. The recent induction meeting had taken place in the Council Chamber and included a presentation by the Assistant Director of Governance. The Team SK quiz was about the district of South Kesteven.

The HR Manager added that the new e-learning module was a user-friendly system and guidance around working from home was included in the induction process. Key members of staff and trade union representatives were introduced as well as their location.

AGREED:

That the Employment Committee:

- a). **noted the update on South Kesteven's induction process.**

16. Pensions Policy Statement and Pensions Discretions Procedure

Councillor Mason, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities introduced the report on the Pensions Policy Statement and Pensions Discretions Procedure. The Committee was informed that there is a requirement on employers to formulate, publish and keep under review a policy statement in relation to the exercise of a number of discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Senior HR Officer explained that the changes to the Pensions Policy Discretion Procedure are minor changes to wording to reflect statutory requirements and also to reflect organisational structure and job title changes. All discretions will continue to be dealt with in accordance with the Principles of the Pensions Policy Statement.

Employment Committee were asked to delegate approval of future minor changes to the Pensions Policy Statement and Pensions Policy Discretions Procedure to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- Were there any financial implications?

- Were the minor legislative changes to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to ensure a quicker and more efficient process?

It was confirmed that there were no financial implications due to the minor changes to policy and The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that if the Employment Committee approved the recommendation, they would work in consultation with the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities.

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED:**

That the Committee:

- a) **Approved the changes to the Pensions Policy Statement and Pensions Policy Discretion Procedure.**
- b) **Delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive for minor legislative changes to the Pensions Policy Statement and Pensions Policy Procedure.**

A Member requested that the Chairman consider deferring some of the agenda items to the next Committee on 16 November 2022 due to time constraints.

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED:**

That the Employment Committee defer Agenda items:

9. **SKDC Intranet**
11. **Employee Handbook**
12. **Employee Rewards and Recognition were deferred to the 16 November Employment Committee meeting**

17. Draft Operational Driving Policy

The Council has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all employees while at work. Employers and employees also have a duty to ensure that others are not put at risk by work related driving activities.

The Policy also supports risk management, ensuring that employees are aware of their responsibilities and the relevant procedures that must be adhered to. The use of CCTV and GPS tracking devices assists in providing evidence should a vehicle be involved in any accident, incident, or insurance claim and enables the Council to fulfil its duties to minimise the health and safety risks associated with occupational driving and have a positive impact on behaviours and support the timely and accurate investigation of any incidents.

Members welcomed the report.

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED:**

That the Committee:

- a) **Approved the adoption of the South Kesteven District Council Operational Driving Policy**
- b) **Delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities, to make minor amendments to the Policy which may become necessary from time to time to ensure its continued accuracy, but do not affect its direction or intent.**

Exclusion of Press and Public

Members considered excluding the press and public, following a vote it was **AGREED** unanimously.

DECISION:

That the press and public be excluded during discussion of the following agenda item because of the likelihood that information is exempt under paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed to them.

(The Deputy Chief Executive, HR Manager and HR Officers left the Council Chamber and the Chief Executive joined the meeting)

18. Proposed Director Targets for 2022 - 2023

Restricted minute.

19. Work Programme 2022 - 2023

It was clarified that the deferred items from today's meeting would be added to the next scheduled Employment Committee meeting on 16 November 2022 on the Work Programme.

The Committee noted the contents of the Work Programme 2022-2023.

The Vice-Chairman asked for clarification on whether the Employee handbook was available online and the HR Manager confirmed that it was.

20. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

There was no other business.

21. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:40.