

Meeting of the Employment Committee (Minutes)

Wednesday, 4 September 2024,
2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Anna Kelly (Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Paul Martin

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Virginia Moran

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Officers

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Fran Beckitt, Head of Service – Human Resources and Organisational Development
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer

13. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

14. Disclosure of interests

There were no disclosures of interest noted.

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024

An amendment was requested by a Member regarding page six of the proposed minutes, under the 'Human Resources Policies' section. The suggested amendment was to include that the following information had not only been discussed with the Unions but also '**accepted**' by the Unions:

- *“The Disciplinary Policy was designed to maintain the standards of conduct and behaviour of staff. The major revision here was the timescales for warnings, alongside further guidance and clarity over the process.*
- *The proposed change to the Paternity Policy was a move from one to two week’s fully paid paternity cover.*
- *More guidance was contained within the refreshed Probation Policy.*
- *There was also a proposed amendment around hearings – if a member of staff’s probation could end in dismissal then that hearing would fall in line with SKDC’s other processes.*
- *The DBS Policy was a new, rather than refreshed policy.*
- *The Attendance Policy contained more information and expectations over officers’ responsibilities in this area. There was also an amendment to the attendance procedure.*
- *There were no changes recommended for either the Recruitment or Flexi-time policies, they were included for completeness.”*

The proposed minutes, with this suggested amendment, were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

The restricted minutes from the meeting held on 8 July 2024 were also proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

16. Updates from the previous meeting

It was noted by members that they had received the statistics regarding South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) staff disciplinaries, requested at the previous meeting.

Regarding the Pay Award, the Democratic Services Manager informed Members that Members allowances had been increased in line with Officer pay. Members would receive this uplift in their September pay slip, and this would also include backdated pay to April 2024.

17. Employee Engagement Survey 2024

The report was introduced by the Leader of the Council:

502 colleagues took part in the Employee Engagement Survey 2024, constituting 85% of the SKDC workforce. This was an increase on the 74% participation rate reported in 2023, and 42% in 2022.

The survey had been open for 3 weeks to allow colleagues to take part. The Leader noted that SKDC not only intended to act on the feedback of the

survey, but that some changes had already been implemented such as allowing the Waste Team to vary their uniform in the summer months.

Whilst the responses had been positive overall, the survey had identified that satisfaction levels regarding pay had decreased.

The Leader praised the work of the Head of Paid Services and the wider SKDC workforce for the progress made and positive outcome of the survey.

The report was continued by the Human Resources Manager:

The survey identified an increase in the Engagement Index over the last 4 years, recorded as 72% for 2024. This was a significant result as it meant that more colleagues within the SKDC workforce found SKDC to be a happy place to work and were more likely to recommend working for SKDC.

The Wellbeing Index had also increased to 66%, an increase of 2% upon the 64% recorded in 2023. The Wellbeing Index gave colleagues the opportunity to voice their feelings about issues such as work-life balance, employee mental wellbeing, and workloads. All 3 issues received positive responses, increasing by 6%, 7%, and 4% respectively.

39% of colleagues also reported engaging with wellbeing events over the last 12 months. Those that didn't engage cited being too busy or not being aware as the main reasons for not attending.

Not only had the feedback indicated the feelings of the SKDC workforce, but the full details of the survey held by the HR Department allowed results to be broken down into teams and demographics such as age, gender or service duration. This data can be used to formulate future action plans for improving staff engagement and wellbeing.

The following areas were all reported positively within the responses:

- Teamwork,
- Confidence in leadership,
- Treatment by line managers,
- Development & progression,
- Innovation,
- Hybrid working.

Regarding the work environment, it was noted that the percentage of staff members feeling safe at work had slightly decreased by one percent, but this was still a highly positive response at 86% of respondents.

The Human Resources Manager highlighted that the People Panel and Senior Leadership Team were being engaged in the discussions regarding the results.

During discussion, Members raised the following:

The highly positive responses were praised, particularly regarding innovation.

Members discussed the responses regarding bullying and harassment in the workplace over the last 12 months. 86% of respondents did not report receiving any instances of bullying or harassment. 7% of respondents were neutral in their response and 6% responded negatively. Members of the committee raised concerns that 6% of those surveyed did respond that they had been bullied or harassed and 8% felt neutral rather than positive about this aspect of their workplace.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED to note the findings of the survey.

18. Work Programme 2024-2025

It was suggested that a follow up on the points raised by the Staff Engagement Survey 2024 was included on the Work Programme, particularly reviewing the responses by specific teams.

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED by vote to exclude the press, public and any non-Members of the Employment Committee during discussion of the next agenda item because of the likelihood that information that was exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would have been disclosed to them.

20. Proposed Director Targets for 2024/2025

The Director targets for 24/25 were AGREED as printed, with amendments.

A vote took place to re-admit members of the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

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

There was no other business raised by Members.

The Employment Committee meeting of September 4th, 2024, ended at 15:14.