

Minutes of the meeting of Employment panel held at Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford on Monday 13 January 2020 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner (chairperson)
Councillor Tony Johnson (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Liz Harvey and Terry James

Officers: Assistant director, people

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from members of the panel.

17. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no named substitutes.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairperson.

20. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

21. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

22. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The assistant director people introduced the report, noting that the pay policy statement was an annual requirement and that there had been no significant changes to the policy. The panel was required to consider the draft statement and make recommendation to Council for its adoption.

The assistant director drew attention to an amendment that was required to update a post title following a recent appointment in the adults and communities directorate.

In discussion of the report the panel noted that:

- Honoraria payments were not widely used and were generally small payments where staff were providing cover for a permanent post holder for a short period of time;
- Rates of pay in Herefordshire were lower than neighbouring councils, the offer from other councils was monitored and pay was not the only factor but market supplements were used where there were difficulties recruiting to particular roles, the assistant director had delegated authority to make some additional payments to react to market forces;
- All market forces payments were attached to the post rather than the person appointed and were reviewed no later than the two year anniversary to check that the original market conditions were still in place;
- The salary ratio between the council's lowest paid staff and the chief executive's salary compared favourably with other councils and was declining.

The panel were content with the pay policy statement but requested that further details on reviews of market supplement payments and benchmarking with other councils be included in the covering report presented to Council.

It was agreed that:

- (a) The draft pay policy statement at appendix A be recommended to full Council for approval.**

23. INTRODUCTION OF AN ANNUAL LEAVE PURCHASE SCHEME FOR EMPLOYEES

The assistant director people introduced the report and highlighted key points. The proposals would see council staff allowed to buy and potentially sell annual leave, with an initial six month trial limited to buying up to three days pro rata to assess the take up and impact. Use of additional leave would be subject to line manager approval and service requirements. If the trial were successful, the option to increase the numbers of days which could be purchased and to allow staff to sell some annual leave could be considered.

The decision on approval of the policy would be taken by the Chief Executive. The employment panel were being consulted as the policy would represent a change to staff terms and conditions.

In discussion of the report the panel noted that:

- Staff were currently able to carry forward five days leave pro-rata with line manager permission;
- It was important that staff took the leave they were entitled to and panel members were concerned that if the option to sell leave were to be included staff welfare should be considered and monitored;
- Feedback would be monitored from staff, line managers and trade unions to assess how well the scheme was working;
- Hoople already had a leave purchase scheme in place and felt that this was working well, a relatively small percentage of staff used it and there were specific windows when requests could be submitted to aid in planning;
- Neighbouring councils had leave purchase policies in place and Herefordshire Council should have a comparable offer;
- There was no defined notice period for leave requests but current policy stated that reasonable notice should be given and that the more notice given the more likely it was that the leave request would be approved, managers would be expected to manage peak periods of demand such as school holidays;
- It was important that managers be open and transparent in decision making when considering requests for additional leave.

The panel requested that the report make clear income generation was not a driver for the initiative and that there would need to be balance in the system to ensure pressure was not placed on colleagues of staff taking additional leave.

The assistant director stated that a report on the trial period would be brought back to the panel in January 2021.

It was agreed that:

(a) Employment Panel recommend the proposed annual leave trading scheme for Herefordshire Council employees to the Chief Executive.

The meeting ended at 10.41 am

Chairperson

