

Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Management Board held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 28 November 2022 at 2.00 pm

Present and voting: Councillor Christy Bolderson (chairperson) and Councillors: Graham Andrews, Felicity Norman, Louis Stark, David Summers and Elissa Swinglehurst.

Councillors attending remotely: Councillors Jonathan Lester and William Wilding.

Members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.

In attendance: Councillor Liz Harvey - Cabinet Member - Finance, Corporate Services

Officers: Tracey Sampson - Director of HR and Organisational Development, John Coleman - Democratic Services Manager, Michael Carr - Interim Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Toni Fagan, Councillor Phillip Howells and Councillor Yolande Watson.

31. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

33. MINUTES

The committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on 7th October 2022.

The Chairperson invited any proposed corrections for accuracy to the minutes. There were none.

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

34. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions from members of the public had been received.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

No questions from members of the Council had been received.

36. **HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S HUMAN RESOURCES AND WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

The committee considered Herefordshire Council's Human Resources and Workforce Strategy, with questions to Councillor Liz Harvey - Cabinet Member - Finance, Corporate Services and Planning and Tracey Sampson - Director of HR and Organisational Development and a report from the Director of HR and Organisational Development to provide a summary of progress against the strategic aims in the council's workforce strategy.

The Director of HR and Organisational Development was invited to present the report. She explained that this was the first time that the strategy had been brought before a scrutiny committee of the Council. Thereafter, the committee questioned Councillor Liz Harvey - Cabinet Member - Finance, Corporate Services and Planning and Tracey Sampson - Director of HR and Organisational Development on the development of the Human Resources and Workforce Strategy.

Questions included questions on organisational staffing structure, communicating Council priorities and values, the use of agency workers and cost implications, support employees, particularly female staff, with childcare responsibilities.

The Cabinet Member was asked about the Council's organisational staffing structure and the extent that it links clearly to delivery of Council priorities, key competences and service and organisational outcomes and asked the Cabinet Member whether she believed the organisational structure the Council had was the most optimum to deliver what she and on the Executive would like the Council to deliver and whether there was work being done on organisation structure.

The Cabinet Member commented that she felt that the structure fairly well aligned to the County Plan and the services the council is delivering. Staff can see how they work that they do aligns to the council plan and the deliverables in the Delivery Plan and the structure is quite well fitted to its purpose. Whether it is an optimum structure depends also on working within the organisation and a one council approach and cross cutting services. She welcomed, however, any suggestions from the committee on how this might improved.

It was also asked whether the Council's KPIs and staffing of the different departments reflected the priorities of the Council. It was asked to what extent that Herefordshire Council priorities and values are communicated to staff and the extent to which it was made clear how what they do makes a difference to delivery of the Council's priorities and services to local residents.

It was asked to what extent the Council brand is communicated to staff and for recruitment. It was asked to what extent the Council provided appropriate facilities to support employees, particularly female staff, but, it was emphasised, not only female staff, with childcare responsibilities.

There were questions on the overall level of agency spend for the Council as a whole had increased from £2.4 million to £10.9 million over the four years to 2021 to 2022 and that the main departmental pressure to this appeared from the children and young people's services department, but also that other Council departments with escalating agency staff costs.

At the end of the questions to the Cabinet Member and Director of HR and Organisational Development the committee considered and debated its key findings. It

was agreed that the key findings be agreed and drawn up for further consideration at the next meeting, which may form the basis of the report to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the key findings of the committee are:

1. That further work be carried out to ensure that Herefordshire council priorities and values are communicated clearly to staff, including during staff induction and training, making it clear also how what they do makes a difference to delivery of the Council's priorities through services to local residents.
2. That the Council brand, not just the employer brand, be further enhanced and communicated to staff and for recruitment and that there be a campaign to promote Herefordshire Council as a great place to live and work.
3. That performance measures be reviewed to ensure that the Council has the most appropriate and effective key performance indicators (KPIs) through strategic oversight of HR and workforce developments.
4. That the Council provide appropriate facilities to support employees with childcare responsibilities.
5. That the Council's organisational staffing structure be reviewed to ensure that it links clearly to delivery of Council priorities, key competences and service and organisational outcomes.
6. Having noted that the overall level of agency spend for the Council as a whole has increased from £2.4 million to £10.9 million over the four years to 2021 to 2022 and that the main departmental pressure to this arises from the children and young people's services department, but also that other Council departments do also present with escalating agency staff costs,

that the cabinet take action to reduce the overall level of agency staff costs.

37. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered its work plan for the remainder of the 2022-2023 municipal year and noted the proposed amendments, including the cancellation of the meeting previously scheduled for 2nd December 2022 and deferral of the items for that meeting to the meeting on 9th January 2023 (Budget performance and Treasury Management items to be moved to 9th January 2023 meeting) and a new meeting date on 17th January 2023 to consider the Council's draft budget proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board previously scheduled for 2nd December 2022 be cancelled and items deferred to the meeting on 9th January 2023.

That a meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board be scheduled to take place on 17th January 2023 to consider the draft budget proposals for 2023-2024.

38. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board was agreed to be held on 9th January 2023.

The meeting ended at 4.26 pm

Chairperson