

STAFF COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2018 - 2.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor R Butcher (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Mrs V Bucknor, Councillor D Connor, Councillor Mrs A Hay and Councillor P Murphy

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Clark

Officers in attendance: Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer), Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD) and Phil Hughes (Head of Leisure Services)

S9/18 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2018 were confirmed and signed.

S10/18 OVERVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

Sam Anthony provided an overview of the Council's sickness absence policy and an update on current absence information.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Murphy asked how stress is measured as this is different to each individual? Sam Anthony agreed it is difficult to measure but there is a stress awareness policy and a stress risk assessment can be undertaken by trained staff or HR on individuals who state they are experiencing stress. There are six factors determined by the Health and Safety Executive to help identify what those stressors are. She stated that most of the time it is always something outside the organisation that is contributing to the stress. There are various methods of support available to help the individual and mitigating actions that can take place, but it is the responsibility of the individual as well as the organisation to manage those stressors.
- Councillor Mrs Hay asked for clarification on absence from conditions covered by the Equality Act. Sam Anthony confirmed these included conditions such as cancer and diabetes or a defined disability as covered by the Act. They are categorised separately because it would not be reasonable to put staff through the same process to manage their absence in these cases.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how Fenland compares with other councils in respect of sickness absence. Sam Anthony replied that the Council compares favourably with other organisations of similar size and characteristics.

The Staff Committee agreed to note the information.

S11/18 OVERVIEW OF STAFF SURVEY

Sam Anthony provided an overview of the Council's most recent staff survey results.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Hay asked for elaboration on the three things staff identified that they felt would improve the quality of life at the Council. Sam Anthony advised that these were around issues such as management effectiveness, ICT improvements and housekeeping, i.e. general hygiene

and air conditioning.

- Councillor Butcher commented that as 46% of staff replied to the survey, this meant half the staff had not responded, therefore the high percentage rates of satisfaction only related to the half who did respond. Sam Anthony agreed this was correct, but advised that action was taken to encourage participation and this year's survey had one of the highest response rates.
- Councillor Butcher noted a higher female to male response. Sam Anthony advised that this reflected the general workforce demographic.
- Councillor Mrs Hay suggested that an email be sent to all staff to ask those that did not respond the reasons why. Sam Anthony advised that although the Management, Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) are doing some work to capture this information, she will take that idea forward. However, the question can only be asked generally as the survey is anonymous so the individuals who did not respond cannot be identified.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that whilst people are generally satisfied, almost 20% of staff had stress-related absence which is not reflected in this report. She is keen to get more feedback from staff not working at the Base or Fenland Hall as she believed these were more customer-facing and wondered if staff did not respond from other sites because they are less engaged or do not feel their views are valid. She asked if a separate, independent survey could be undertaken for customer-facing staff at these sites. Sam Anthony responded that 36% of the 175 responders are based off-site, which is a healthy amount and hard copies were given to staff to encourage them to complete the survey. Also, there are actually many front line staff working at the Base and Fenland Hall who did respond to the survey. In response to the comment about stress-related absence, she commented that this is a separate report, but clarified that only 20% of the total number of absent staff in the last year were off for stress-related factors, not 20% of the whole workforce. Councillor Mrs Hay said it was worth noting that stress is not always necessarily work-related.
- Councillor Butcher noted that two-thirds of those who completed the survey are long term employees, which means they are happy enough to stay with the Council.

The Staff Committee agreed to note the information contained within the report.

S12/18 TRANSFER OF LEISURE CENTRE STAFF TO FREEDOM LEISURE FOLLOWING LEISURE CONTRACT AWARD

Phil Hughes informed the Committee regarding the transfer under TUPE of FDC leisure staff following the recent award to Freedom Leisure of the contract to operate and manage the leisure centres.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses.

The Staff Committee agreed to note the confidential report and the transfer of leisure staff under TUPE regulations.

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

S13/18 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS REVIEW

Phil Hughes presented a report highlighting proposed changes within the Council's Open Spaces and Leisure Services Teams to ensure that the Council manages contracts with Freedom Leisure and Tivoli (grounds maintenance) effectively.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses.

The Staff Committee agreed to:

- **note the confidential report**
- **note the savings achieved and short term costs incurred as a result of the proposal**
- **approve the proposals as outlined in the report**
- **approve the deleted/new posts**
- **approve any resultant redundancies of Fenland staff as a result.**

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

2.56 pm

Chairman