

Staff Consultative Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Panel** held on **Monday 4 November 2019** at **3.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present:

Chair David Nettleton (Employer's side)
Vice Chair Mark Johnson (Employees' side)

Members (Employer's side)

Carol Bull
James Lay

Substitutes attending for a full Member (Employer's side)

Sara Mildmay-White

Staff Representatives (Employees' side)

Lizzi Cocker
Julie Roberts

Substitutes attending for a staff representative (Employees' side)

Paul Davison

9. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor Sara Mildmay-White was substituting for Councillor Clive Springett (Employer's Side).

Paul Davison was substituting for Richard Smith (Employees' Side).

10. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Griffiths, Clive Springett and Ian Shipp (Employer's Side) and from Penny Mills, Jane Orton and Richard Smith (Employees' Side).

Councillor David Smith (Employer's Side) was also unable to attend the meeting.

11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following typographical amendment:

2. **Election of Chair: 2019/2020**

Second paragraph, first sentence - the words '*In 2029/2020..*', be amended to read '*In 2019/2020..*'

12. **West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2018-2020 - Update (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) provided an update on the actions within the Workforce Strategy, which had been approved in April 2018. The Panel were reminded that the Strategy set out five strategic priorities which focussed on:-

- Skills and Behaviours
- Recruitment and Retention
- Pay, Reward and Recognition
- Health and Well-being
- Workforce Planning and Data

The following updates were then provided:

Skills and Behaviours

- Service restructures
- Learning and Development / Skills and Training / Corporate Training Programmes
- Apprenticeship Levy
- Review of the first year implementation of the Personal Development Review (PDR) Scheme

Recruitment and Retention

- The development of the Council's recruitment website (this item was also the subject of a demonstration later on the agenda)
- Recruitment and retention within the public sector in Suffolk
- Apprenticeships

Pay, Reward and Recognition

- Non-financial benefits for staff

Health and Well-being

- Health checks and workplace well-being (including cholesterol checks; under 40's health checks; flu vaccinations; men's health awareness month; mental health awareness)

Workforce Planning and Data

- This item was subject to a presentation later on the agenda

Some Members of the Panel expressed their concerns with regard to the low rate of pay for apprentices and whether this would prevent some people from being able to afford to apply for an apprenticeship post. The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) explained that the National Apprenticeship Wage rate was paid for the first year of their employment (which was currently £3.90 per hour) and then they received the national minimum wage (dependent on age) for the remainder of their apprenticeship. If apprentices were appointed to a permanent post before they had completed their qualification, then they were moved to the

appropriate salary for the job and would continue to be supported until they finished their studies.

Following on from the concerns raised by the Panel, the Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) agreed to look at the demographics of the Apprentices, to ascertain whether the rate of pay was affecting where people were choosing to apply from.

There being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the update.

13. **West Suffolk Workforce Data Headlines
(Report No: SCP/WS/19/003)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this report which provided a snapshot of the West Suffolk Workforce Data for the last three quarters from 1 January to 30 September 2019.

The main discussion of the data by the Panel centred around:

- **Length of service**
Members queried as to whether data was available which showed the length of service for employees. The Officer explained that this was not shown specifically within the Workforce Data, but this could be collated and made available to the Panel.
- **Staff turnover (Voluntary)**
Members queried with regard to those employees who left the organisation, whether it would be possible to provide the numbers of those who had moved into jobs within the private sector.
- **Sickness absence**
Members queried as to whether the sickness absence data could be split down into full-time employees and part-time employees.

With regards to the additional data requests which had been made above, it was agreed that this information would be circulated to the Panel for their information.

With there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the report.

14. **Strategic Workforce Planning (Presentation)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) provided a presentation ([see link](#)) which explained how the Council was looking at an organisation wide strategic approach to managing its workforce.

It was explained that this approach would connect workforce planning with financial planning and service delivery. It would assist with the identification of factors that may impact on the workplace plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and any potential skills gaps/succession plans.

Part of this approach would also include a monthly workforce planning meeting (with the first meeting having been held on 31 October 2019) to review the workforce data, along with a review of the vacant roles and any resourcing requests. The length of time for a job advertisement was to be increased to one month, which was in line with other public sector partners. The decisions made at the meeting would then be made available to the relevant Assistant Director.

The Panel expressed their support for this strategic approach to workforce planning and with there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the content of the presentation.

15. **West Suffolk Council Recruitment Website (Demonstration)**

The Panel received a demonstration of the new West Suffolk Council dedicated Recruitment Website (<https://recruitment.westsuffolk.gov.uk/>).

It was explained that the Website had been developed to link in with the Council's five core values and behaviours (PRIDE):

- **P**eople: Working positively together with empathy, compassion and respect.
- **R**esponsibility: Taking ownership and being accountable for our own actions.
- **I**ntegrity: Making an honest, open and ethical approach to all we do.
- **D**edication: Focusing on the delivery of our priorities, wanting the best for West Suffolk's communities and businesses.
- **E**nergy: Delivering high standards of performance and being committed to continually improving our work.

The Website was divided into the following Sections:-

- About Us (*Our Services; the West Suffolk area; Values and Behaviours*)
- Why Work for Us (*a culture of learning; Health and wellbeing*)
- Kickstart your Career (*Apprenticeships; Graduates; Internships; Work Experience*)
- Applicant Guidance (*Equal Opportunities; Disability Confident Employer*)
- Current vacancies

The Website also included various quotes from West Suffolk Council employees explaining as to why they personally considered that the Council was a good place to work.

The Panel commended this new Website and its content and with there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the demonstration.

16. **Sophie Claydon Apprentice Award (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this item and explained to the Panel that a new award to recognise and celebrate the performance of the Council's Apprentices was to be launched this year. The Sophie Claydon Apprentice Award, which was sponsored by UNISON, was in memory of Sophie who began her career with

the Council as an apprentice in HR and who demonstrated the values and beliefs that West Suffolk Council shared today.

The Annual Award would be open to current Apprentices, on Apprenticeship Contracts, who had been in post for at least six months, as well as former Apprentices who had moved into roles in the Council during the period 1 January to 31 August 2019. Nominations were due to open this week and would close on Thursday 21 November 2019.

The nominations would be judged by a Panel, which would also include the Portfolio Holder for Governance. The winner and details of all nominations would be announced at the December staff briefings. The winner would receive a prize and a shield engraved with their name which they would keep until the following year. All nominees would be presented with a certificate.

There being no decision required, the Panel expressed their support for this Award, which they considered was a lovely gesture in the memory of Sophie.

17. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Panel **noted** that there were no further meetings of the Panel scheduled in the Calendar of Meetings for 2019/2020. However, the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development), proposed that an extraordinary meeting be convened in March 2020, so that the Panel could continue to be kept regularly updated on workforce matters.

Therefore, it was **agreed** for an additional meeting date in March 2020 to be confirmed to the Panel in due course.

The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm

Signed by:

Chair
