

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on MONDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Councillor M Specht (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, N Clarke, T Eynon, G Houlton, V Richichi, S Sheahan and N Smith

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr G Jones, Mrs M Meredith, Mr M Murphy, Ms C Preston, Ms C Proudfoot and Mr P Sanders

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Purver.

25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor S Sheahan declared a pecuniary interest in item 7 – Quarter 2 Performance Management Report, due to the reference in the report to HS2. He advised that he would leave the room during any discussion on HS2.

Councillors T Eynon and S Sheahan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 – Quarter 2 Performance Management Report, as members of Leicestershire County Council, due to the references in the report to the Corporate Risk Register.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

27. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

28. PEOPLE PLAN

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development presented the report to members, outlining the purpose of the People Plan which was part of the wider programme of cultural change in the Council. He highlighted the work which had been undertaken across the organisation in the early development of the plan and the development of a new set of core values. He highlighted the five key themes in the plan as set out in the report and the detailed action plan at Appendix 1. He advised that Policy Development Group would receive further reports to update members on progress made against the actions.

In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that positive discussions had taken place with Trade Unions, however no formal responses had yet been received.

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In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that good progress had been made across all departments in the recruitment of apprenticeships, and there were currently 18 apprentices in post against a target of 17.5. He added that this target would need to be revised when the leisure TUPE transfer took place in May 2019.

Councillor T Eynon welcomed the document and was pleased to see the consultation with Trade Unions and the comments in respect of diversity and increasing the methods of applying for jobs, however she was not clear how that might work and how that might help the council to achieve equality. She welcomed the intention to grow our own in skills shortage areas. She also welcomed the focus on gender but felt that this should not be the only equalities focus. She commented on the difficulties experienced by people on the autistic spectrum in respect of getting into work due to the format of job interviews in particular. She referred to the additional funding available from the government for apprenticeships in areas where there were skills shortages, such as IT. She referred to the open recruitment event taking place and sought confirmation whether Stephenson College were aware of the new ways of providing apprenticeships or whether other apprenticeship partners should be considered.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that work placements were being utilised much more and the Council had recently agreed to work with Stephenson College with pilot schemes on T levels. He agreed to consider the concerns raised by Councillor T Eynon.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor V Richichi, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that the proposed changes to the flexible working arrangements at the Council would need very careful consideration and business need would be taken into account. He added that it may be necessary to restrict the availability of flexible working arrangements for some staff. He assured members that the arrangements would be carefully considered for each team to ensure that efficiency and service availability was not affected. He added that there may be additional benefits to the customer associated with different working hours.

In response to a question from Councillor N Smith, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development confirmed that certificates would be issued on completion of apprenticeships.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that he was surprised that there was no specific mention of the employment of people with disabilities in the People Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sheahan, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that the gender pay gap at the Council was currently 6%, which was in line with the average for the East Midlands. He added that a report would be brought to the group to consider how this could be reduced in future years, however he advised that the report provided to Council contained the data from the previous year so it had not been possible to influence this figure.

Councillor R Ashman commented that age discrimination had not been covered and he felt that, in addition to apprenticeships and job fairs, the Council should consider looking at other ways of attracting people who had something to offer in terms of previous work / life experience.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development explained that there was not an intention to ignore the other key protected characteristics in the report, however the emphasis was on targeting the recruitment and retention of younger workers as it was

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recognised that the Council had an ageing workforce profile. He added that some policies on protected characteristics were built into the Council's existing HR procedures.

In response to questions from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development explained that the council had experienced some difficulties with recruiting to those areas with national skills shortages, such as planning, legal and housing maintenance. He added that in most other employment areas the council saw a good response to recruitment, and good retention rates.

Councillor N Clarke referred to the development of linked grade structures to improve career progression. He commented that whilst this could sometimes lead to people taking on additional duties in order to advance, it could also lead to people being paid at the same level for doing more.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development explained that a number of career-graded schemes were in place and clear attainment markers were set. He added that the advantage of career-graded schemes was that they could help with the retention of staff who might not otherwise develop further within the organisation.

In response to questions from Councillor N Clarke, the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that the council did contribute to the apprenticeship levy and was making good use of that by having a high number of apprentices.

RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed action plan be noted.

29. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO FLY TIPPING

The Environmental Protection Team Manager presented the report to members and gave a presentation on the actions being taken to reduce fly tipping.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that it would be interesting to see what other authorities did differently, for example, whether others offered a free bulky waste collection. He felt it would be more useful to look at the actual costs incurred by fly tips.

In response to comments from Councillor S Sheahan, the Environmental Protection Team Manager explained that the different reporting approaches used by other authorities made it difficult to compare on a like for like basis. She added that the work being undertaken was having a measurable positive impact. She explained that most fly tips were not large items and mainly occurred where people had paid someone to take away household waste. She advised that the aim was to encourage the general public to support officers more in tackling the problem, and officers were working towards launching an app to enable people to report issues, and to enable officers to be more responsive. She added that a drone had also been purchased and would be put in to use pending permission from the civil aviation authority.

The Waste Services Team Manager agreed to provide more information on the bulky waste services offered by other local authorities. She provided an update on the issues at Netherfield Lane which had been a prolific fly tipping location for many years. She outlined the issues around access and gating of the area and explained that the team had stopped clearing the site due to the gate being erected.

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The Environmental Protection Team Manager explained that a campaign was being undertaken which included signage, the installation of cameras, the mobile CCTV camera and observations by staff.

Councillor S Sheahan welcomed the campaign and felt that prevention was the right approach. He requested more information on the cost of fly tips.

Councillor N Smith congratulated officers on the improvements made and welcomed the installation of cameras. He referred to a specific area in Ravenstone which had become the target of fly tipping.

The Environmental Protection Team Manager advised that she had been in discussions with Leicestershire County Council on other hotspots in the area and would raise the issue of this site at their next meeting.

Councillor T Eynon expressed concerns about the costs to residents of bulky waste collections and the impact of this on poorer households. She felt it would be interesting to compare how much the council was making from its bulky waste collections compared with other authorities.

The Head of Community Services advised that this was a complex issue, however he agreed to provide the fees and charges for the next year which were currently being drawn up.

The Environmental Protection Team Manager explained that the council sought to recover the costs of fly tipping during prosecutions.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, the Environmental Protection Team Manager advised that consideration was being given to providing skips in certain areas as part of an environmental day next year.

In response to comments and questions from Councillor V Richichi, the Environmental Protection Team Manager advised that the 29 fixed penalties issued had not solely been related to bring sites. She explained that the campaign at the bring sites concentrated on a combination of enforcement and education as many people did not realise that leaving a bag by the side of the bin was classified as a fly tip. In response to concerns raised by Councillor V Richichi about issuing fixed penalty notices at bring sites, the Environmental Protection Team Manager stated that this had not resulted in a reduction in recycling or an increase in fly tipping. She added that the campaign had resulted in a change of behaviour and an increased understanding that leaving recycling at the side of the bins could result in a fixed penalty notice.

Councillor M Specht congratulated the team on their sterling work and commented that both Farm Town and Church Town had been free of fly tips for 5 weeks, which was a huge success.

In response to a question from Councillor G Hault, the Environmental Protection Team Manager advised that feedback from the consultation on the proposal to introduce a new fixed penalty fine in relation to householders' not fulfilling their duty of care with regards to their waste was due in November. She agreed to provide an update once this was received.

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

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30. 2018/19 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Strategic Director of Place presented the report to members, drawing their attention to the performance summary set out in the report and the exception report at Appendix 1.

In response to questions from Councillor S Sheahan, the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services advised that the allocation of newly built homes could only be restricted to a particular town or village if the new development was classified as a rural exception site. Otherwise the property would be let to anyone on the housing register, and it was necessary to prove a connection to North West Leicestershire in order to join the housing register.

Councillor S Sheahan expressed concerns regarding Queensway House in Measham, in particular regarding negotiations with the adjacent site and the risk of the site becoming derelict. He requested that prompt action be taken.

The Head of Housing and Customer Services agreed to provide an update with more detail to Councillor S Sheahan.

In response to questions from Councillor S Sheahan, the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services advised that an architect had been employed to look at the design of the next phase of the off street parking improvement programme at Ridgeway Road, Ashby. It was not yet known how many parking spaces would be created.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sheahan, the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services advised that the overall delivery of affordable housing and the housing need for the district was set out in the Local Plan. He reminded members that the housing need was being reviewed as part of the review of the Local Plan.

Councillor S Sheahan commented on the high level of sicknesses relating to back pain and asked how much of this was preventable. The Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development advised that it was not currently known what percentage of illnesses involving back pain were work related. He agreed to provide this information in future reports. He added that manual handling training was provided for employees where relevant.

In response to a question from Councillor S Sheahan, the Strategic Director of Place advised that the work at Moira Furnace was focussed on the furnace itself and considering the use of the wider site to support the furnace. He added that this project was at a very early stage.

In response to questions from Councillor V Richichi, the Strategic Director of Place advised that a mid-point review had been completed regarding the shop front improvements scheme which would be considered by Cabinet. He explained that confidence in Coalville was measured through feedback from residents and traders, the partnerships in place and the success of events, including the communications and press releases issued.

Councillor T Eynon welcomed the level of data in the report. She commended the Head of Customer Services and felt it was clear that things were moving in the right direction. She commented that according to Leicestershire County Council's data, there was a need to boost specialist / affordable housing delivery across the market area.

Councillor N Clarke thanked officers for providing the Health and Safety data he had requested. He felt it would be useful to compare this with historical data to see if the

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trends were in the right direction. He added that it would be useful to put this into context regarding the percentage of staff affected and to attach costs to some of the avoidable incidents.

In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services outlined some of the criteria in the housing allocations policy, in particular the need to demonstrate a local connection to North West Leicestershire, and advised that numbers on the housing register had remained stable and so he was confident this was not being abused.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Quarter 2 Performance Management Report be noted.

31. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services drew members' attention to the future work programme and the high volume of business for the next meeting.

Members discussed the options available and the business to be transacted at the next meeting. It was agreed that a further meeting be scheduled on 6 February 2019.

Councillor N Smith left the meeting at 7.26pm during the debate on item 6 – The Council's Approach to Fly Tipping.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.07 pm

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