

EXTRACT of the 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 Houlst, 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

## **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.

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 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.