

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

(Committee Room 1/2 - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

9 September, 2019

Chairperson: Councillor D.Jones

Vice Chairperson: Counillor D.Cawsey

Councillors: S.Bamsey, S.E.Freeguard, N.T.Hunt, J.Jones and A.J.Taylor

Non-Voting Members: Councillors C.Clement-Williams, A.R.Lockyer, P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

Officers in Attendance: S.Rees, D.Hopkins, L.Doyle, L.Margetson, A.Hutchings and N.Headon

1. **Robotics Process Automate in Human Resources**

The Committee received a presentation and update on the pilot of Robotics Process Automate (RPA) technology within the Human Resources Team.

Officers explained that the introduction of the new technology had reduced the amount of hours officers spent on routine, data processing work enabling them to move onto higher value work that required human intervention.

The 'robot' uses Blue Prism technology, and one employee in HR and two employees in ICT are undergoing training to become 'Blue Prism Developers', providing internal resilience for the Council.

Members thanked the Human Resource Team for their hard work on the pilot scheme.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2. **Workforce Information Report**

Members received an overview of the Workforce Information Report for Quarter 1, 2019/20, as detailed in the circulated report. Officers welcomed any feedback from Members.

Members showed concern regarding the high number of sickness absence of teaching staff. It was explained to Members that this reflects the fact that teachers represent one of the Council's largest groups of employees – it was agreed that future reports will provide FTE data, as this will Members understand the comparisons between services. Officers also highlighted that there are occupational differences in sickness – someone working in an office can expect to have lower sickness than someone working outside or in the care sector for example.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture agreed to meet to discuss sickness in schools, and to understand how shared experience may benefit Council schools. .

It was noted that future reports presented to Members at Personnel Committee would include quarterly job reduction data, Full-time Equivalent (FTE) figures for each service, as well as number of days lost and the gender split in sickness figures. .

A discussion took place in relation to the number of staff absent with stress, it was highlighted that work related stress is lower than personal stress absence. Members showed concern as to how we can combat this. Officers explained that we would be signing up to the Time to Change Employer Pledge during September, this would mean we could access further support to help improve wellbeing of staff.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

3. **Human Resource Support provided to support school budget setting / Strategic Schools Improvement Programme - Spring 2019**

Members were provided with information of the Human Resources (HR) support to Schools and Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP), as detailed in the circulated report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

4. **Succession Planning Update**

Members were provided with an update in relation to succession planning, as detailed in the circulated report.

Officers highlighted that the Succession Planning Toolkit, Appendix 1 of the circulated report, had been developed in order to help management identify the skills and training needs required by employees / future employees.

It was noted that all training, including e-learning is available to all employees, and should be discussed as part of the employee's annual performance appraisal review.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

5. **Disability Confident Employer Status**

Members received an update on the Council's continued accreditation to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme. It was noted that the accreditation will last for two years until 6 August, 2021.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6. **Pay Update**

Members received an update in relation to national pay negotiations for employees employed under Local Government Services (LGS) 'Green Book' terms and conditions of employment.

It was noted that the National Joint Council (NJC) would be consulting with employers through a series of regional pay briefings during September and October 2019. The Welsh regional consultation meeting would be held during September in Cardiff. Members were asked to consider the responses as detailed in the circulated report and provide feedback.

RESOLVED: That the information provided in relation to national pay negotiations, as outlined in the circulated report, be noted.

That the response to inform the regional employer consultation, as detailed in the circulated report, be approved.

7. **Voluntary Redundancy Arrangements**

Members were updated on the proposed arrangements for Voluntary Redundancy (VR), to be implemented during September 2019.

It was noted that employees would be advised that voluntary redundancy is available to express an interest on an ongoing and indefinite basis, this would enable more flexibility managing workforce change, this would not include School employees.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

CHAIRPERSON