

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

14 MAY 2014 AT 10.30 AM

PRESENT: Mr DW Inman - Chairman
Mr DS Cope (for Mr KWP Lynch), Mrs WA Hall, Mr JS Moore and Ms BM Witherford

Officers in attendance: Nigel Deacon and Rebecca Owen

530 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Lynch, with Councillor Cope substituting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

531 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

With regard to the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2014, it was noted that the Independent Person, Mr Grimes, was not listed as being present. It was agreed that this would be amended.

It was moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Witherford, and

RESOLVED –

- (i) the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2014 be approved subject to the abovementioned amendment and signed by the Chairman;
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

532 ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Councillor Inman explained that, due to his accident and subsequent hospitalisation and then problems with his PC, he had only recently drafted the letter to the opposition Leader as requested at the previous meeting. He committed to send the letter that same day.

533 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

534 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2014-2016

Members were presented with the draft People Strategy which set out the strategic priorities for 2014 – 2016.

Discussion ensued regarding pension reform and the move to a career average scheme and auto-enrolment but members queried the statement that the authority was deferring implementation. They were assured that the changes and auto-enrolment, whilst technically deferred, had not changed in practical terms. New starters continued to be automatically enrolled in the LGPS. It was requested that the point about which aspect was being deferred be stressed in the report to Council.

Concern was expressed regarding the ageing population and related ageing workforce, however the apprenticeship scheme was welcomed. A breakdown of vacancies by job level was requested to enable members to see if there was a pattern.

With regard to sickness absence members were reminded that a lot of work had been done on this a few years previously and had been very successful, yet the figures had increased again over the last two years. In response it was noted that the figures had been distorted by a few cases of long term sick leave, but reference was also made to the ageing workforce and the increased number of direct employees in physical jobs as a result of bringing housing repairs in-house. It was suggested that a breakdown of sickness absence by service area would be useful to back this up. However members recognised that work of this nature was under the remit of the Local Joint & Safety Panel.

It was further noted that the attendance management framework needed to be reviewed but that work to identify and reduce sickness absence was underway. It was requested that a report be brought back to the committee when the work was complete.

A member highlighted the absence from the report of anything about member-officer relationships and behaviour, and it was requested that reference be made in the Strategy to the Protocol on Member/Officer relationships in the Constitution, the Code of Conduct and the Member Development Strategy to show where the equivalent information relating to members could be found. Whilst acknowledging this information, a member asked what would happen if an officer was subject to bullying by a member, as if it were by an officer the officer could be disciplined. A member suggested that there were procedures for dealing with all bullying in the workplace, but officers confirmed that the only course of action when being bullied by non-employees was the Prevention of Harassment Act 1997.

Members requested an update on progress against the strategy later in the year.

On the motion of Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Moore, it was

RESOLVED – Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the Strategy.

535 COUNCIL COMPLAINTS 2013-14

A report was presented to members which updated on formal Council Complaints processed during 2013-14. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of complaints, yet members felt that this was fairly low compared to the number of residents in the Borough and officers were commended for this.

Members felt that it would be useful to see a comparison by service area for the previous year to help identify any patterns and any particular causes for the increase, and it was agreed that this would be sent to them after the meeting. It was also agreed that future reports would include a comparison with other authorities.

On the motion of Councillor Witherford, seconded by Councillor Moore, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) a further report be brought in 12 months and annually thereafter.

(The Meeting closed at 11.37 am)

CHAIRMAN