

Employee Forum

10 April 2024

Present:

Member representatives:

Mrs S Hoss, Mrs J James, Councillor V Thomas, and Councillor A Wilcox.

Staff representatives:

J Arkley, C Broome, D Hughes, G Jones, T Jones, Tomos Jones, C Price, Chloe Price, D Roberts, E Rooney (Unison Rep) and C Syme.

Union representatives:

Jonathan Lewis (Unison).

(Green room, Llanion Park and online: 2.00pm – 2.45pm)

1. Personal Matters

The Deputy Chair recalled the recent passing of Councillor R Owens and acknowledged his great service to the Authority and as a former Chair of the Employee Forum. A minute's silence was observed.

2. Election of Chair for the meeting

The Deputy Chair, C Price, took the Chair for the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Price, Councillor C Williams, T Bean, K Gravell, G Higgins-Washbrook, R Hughes, G Lister, R Lovell and B Rees.

3. Introductions

All those present introduced themselves.

4. Disclosures of interest

It was noted that all Staff Representatives had an interest in item 7, Staff Recognition, however as no decisions were being taken, the Authority's Monitoring Officer had confirmed that individual declarations of interest were not necessary.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 08 November 2023 were presented for confirmation and signature.

Mrs J James highlighted that Dr R Plummer had been recorded as having proposed the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 July 2023 despite not



having been in attendance at the meeting held on the 08 November 2023. It was noted that the minutes had in fact been proposed by Councillor R Owens and seconded by Councillor A Wilcox and the record would be amended to reflect this.

On the proposal of Mrs J James, seconded by Councillor A Wilcox, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 08 November 2023 be confirmed and signed subject to the above amendment.

6. Action Log

The Chief Executive provided an update regarding the Living Wage accreditation and confirmed that the Authority remained intent on obtaining the accreditation however changes in procurement legislation and complications regarding the potential impact on contractors had resulted in a delay. It was added that contractors had not previously been considered and work was being carried out to establish a process that would be beneficial to all parties. The Chief Executive explained that the relevant guidance failed to provide sufficient information and so research would be conducted to understand best practice before proceeding.

In response to a Members' query regarding the timeframe for the action, it was confirmed that the proposed changes to the procurement legislation were expected within the next 6 months and so it was hoped that further progress in achieving the accreditation would be seen in that time.

Noted.

7. Staff Recognition

The Chair welcomed the Head of People Services who presented a report regarding the Authority's Long Service Awards Scheme. It was reported that at a recent meeting of the Staff Representatives, the issue of long service awards had been raised and it was agreed that the matter be presented to the Employee Forum for further discussion.

The report outlined the Authority's current Long Service Awards scheme, relevant research, staff statistics (such as turnover figures), details of other benefits available to Authority staff and other risk considerations.

It was reported that when considering the Equality Act 2010, staff benefits had the potential of indirectly discriminating on the grounds of age and gender. In response to this, J Lewis explained that he had sought legal guidance on the position of UNISON on this matter and confirmed that UNISON considered long service recognition to be a positive incentive however it was believed that other forms of recognition should also take place.



A wider discussion regarding recognition in general ensued and it was agreed that the current policy was considered outdated due to the change in culture and staff demographic over the years. It was also agreed that staff views should be sought to understand whether more should be done in recognising the achievements and hard work of staff across the Authority and if so, what form this should take. It was suggested that a staff survey could be an effective method of collating staff views and the Head of People Services agreed to this.

Ideas such as the use of the staff newsletter, enamel pins and 'Staff of the week/month' were suggested as other possible forms of recognition.

J Lewis took the opportunity to highlight that any vouchers awarded to staff should be sourced from local suppliers.

The Chief Executive noted that as the Forum was not a decision-making group, the matter would be progressed and an update provided at the next meeting.

Noted.

