

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-COMMITTEE

4th November 2019

Present: Councillor Louis Stephen in the Chair
Councillors A. Amos, Barnes, Bayliss (Vice-Chairman), Berry, Geraghty and Squires

Officers: David Blake, Managing Director
Mark Edwards, Head of People Services
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance and Resources and Returning Officer

10 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor A. Amos for Councillor Mrs L. Hodgson, Councillor Barnes for Councillor Gregson, Councillor Geraghty for Councillor Mitchell.

11 Declarations of Interest

None.

12 Public Participation

None.

13 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations 2019

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the findings of the Review of the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in the Parliamentary Constituency of Worcester which had been carried out in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Returning Officer presented the report and highlighted the main points.

In summary, ten proposals for a change to polling places or polling districts were recommended. These were identified in paragraph 5.2 and Appendix 1 of the report, together with the rationale for each proposal.

In the ensuing discussion the following main points were highlighted:

- Members commented that the title of some venues may be different to those listed. In response, the Returning Officer advised that these details will be checked to ensure they are up-to-date.
- There was a discussion about the use of the Riverside Building in St. Clement Ward. The Returning Officer explained that the Riverside Building is a suitable venue and is available. Any feedback from electors will be considered as part of the regular reviews that are undertaken after every election.

- Oldbury Park Primary School is an existing venue and measures are in place to address safeguarding and on-site security on polling day. Discussions with the Head teacher had highlighted continuing issues regarding safeguarding on site and the Returning Officer had agreed various changes to address these. The Returning Officer reported that the meeting was positive about the continued use of the school as a polling station, subject to these changes. Using the main University building had been considered and the Returning Officer explained that a number of issues had been taken into consideration, including open, unsecured, access to the campus site, the distance from road to the proposed polling station, the open foyer and the number of people using the building. On balance it had been decided that the existing venue is suitable and is available, and therefore no change was proposed.
- The communication plan will address the process for informing electors of changes to polling station locations.
- The Returning Officer explained the criteria for appeals and stated that he was satisfied that the proposals had taken into account the reasonable requirements of the electors.

The Sub-Committee unanimously approved the proposed polling places as set out in the report. In accordance with the Constitution, changes to polling districts are the responsibility of Full Council. The Sub-Committee agreed to recommend the Council to approve the proposals for changes to polling districts, as set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee:

- 1. approve the proposed polling places as set out in Appendix 1 and Section 5.2 of the report;**
- 2. note the proposed polling districts and refer the proposals to Council for consideration and approval as set out in Appendix 1 and Section 5.2 of the report; and**
- 3. subject to approval by Council, agree to authorise the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer to take all necessary steps to implement these recommendations.**

15 Recruitment Policy & Procedure

The Sub-Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Recruitment Policy & Procedure. The Head of People Services presented the report and explained that the current Policy came into effect in July 2015 and was therefore overdue for review. The update incorporated feedback from the People Services team, and technological advances within the Council. The key changes included:

- References to HR changed to People Services and references to Service Manager changed to Head of Service.
- References to Two Ticks "Positive About Disability" Scheme changed to Disability Confident Scheme.

- Introduction of Generic Role Profiles and Task Specifics following the re-working of the Council's pay structure in 2016.
- System improvements meaning that applicants now have the option of attaching a CV rather than complete an online application form; and much of the induction process is now completed on the Learning Lounge via e-learning.

It was noted that the proposals had been the subject of consultation with the trade unions and had been supported by the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the proposed amendments.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the proposed amendments to the Recruitment Policy & Procedure.

16 Grievance Policy and Procedure

The Sub-Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the proposed Grievance Policy and Procedure. The Head of People Services presented the report and explained that the current Procedure came into effect in June 2012 and was therefore overdue for review. The update incorporated feedback from the People Services team, and was in line with current ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. In summary, the main changes were:

- All references to HR changed to People Services, Service Manager changed to Head of Service.
- Recognising and applying the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
- Managers to clarify if any employee communication detailing an issue is deemed a grievance (section 2.4).
- Third Party grievances (section 3.4).
- Principles: To recognise appropriateness of mediation at any stage of a grievance and to make reasonable adjustments for language difficulties. (sections 5.4, 5.6).
- Malicious Intent: If a grievance is not made in good faith and/or made with malicious intent (section 6.1).
- Formal Grievance Meeting: Consider previous grievance resolutions for consistency of treatment (section 9.5)
- Grievances and the wellbeing of employees (section 10).
- Grievances and Ex employees (section 11).
- Where mediation may not be suitable (section 13).
- Related Policies (section 15).
- Appendices: Templates for Notifications of a Formal Grievance and Appeal. (sections 16 and 17).

It was noted that the proposals had been the subject of consultation with the trade unions and had been supported by the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the proposed amendments.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the proposed amendments to the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

17 Dignity at Work (Bullying, Harassment And Victimisation) Policy

The Sub-Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Dignity at Work (Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation) Policy. The Head of People Services presented the report and explained that the current Policy came into effect in August 2013 and was therefore overdue for review. The update incorporated feedback from the People Services team, and was in line with current CIPD, ACAS and gov.uk guidelines. The key changes included:

- All references to HR changed to People Services, of Shareportal changed to Staffroom.
- The inclusion of Victimisation within the Scope, Purpose and Procedural Workflow of the Policy.
- Four additional examples of unacceptable behaviour within the scope of the Policy (Section 5.4, x – xiii).
- Reference to additional related documents of: Employee T&Cs; Recruitment Policy and Procedure; People Strategy. (Section 11).
- Signposting to new H&S Event form to capture Third Party Harassment Incidents. (Section 3.2).

In the ensuing discussion, the Head of People Services explained that there is reference to this topic in the annual Staff Survey. More information can be forwarded to Sub-Committee Members.

It was noted that the proposals had been the subject of consultation with the trade unions and had been supported by the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the proposed amendments.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the proposed amendments to the Dignity at Work (Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation) Policy.

18 Amendment to the Sickness Absence Management Policy & Procedure

The Sub-Committee considered a report on a proposed amendment to the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure. The Head of People Services presented the report and explained that the existing procedure allowed for managers reviewing the attendance of employees who have met trigger points to issue a warning after the review meeting. Such warnings were not in themselves a sanction, but were an indication of the consequences of continuing high levels of sickness absence. On that basis the procedure did not allow for employee appeals against the warning. UNISON had requested that appeals be allowed on the basis that three such warnings could lead to dismissal of the employee. Management were minded to concede this in order to maintain good employee relations. Consequently section 12.1.1 had been amended to provide for appeals to be made to the relevant Head of Service.

It was noted that the proposal had been the subject of consultation with the trade unions and had been supported by the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the proposal.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the proposed amendment to the Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.

19 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 7.40p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
26th February 2020

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