

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-COMMITTEE

13th October 2021

Present: Councillor Adrian Gregson (Vice-Chair) in the Chair

Councillors Bayliss, Gregson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Hodges, Mrs L. Hodgson, Mitchell, Stanley and Stephen

Officers: David Blake, Managing Director
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance

14 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Hodges for Councillor Denham.

15 Apologies

The Chair, Councillor Mitchell, had sent a message prior to the meeting advising that he was delayed in traffic following an accident in the city centre. Councillor Gregson took the Chair for the duration of the meeting. Councillor Mitchell arrived shortly after the start.

16 Declarations of Interest

None.

17 Public Participation

None.

18 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 5th and 26th July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19 Covid-19 Staff Absence Report

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the rates of Covid-19 infection in the Council's workforce since the pandemic began in March 2020. This report had been requested by the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and summarised both the Staff Policy which had been put in place in March 2020, and the revised Policy which was introduced in July 2021 to reflect an increasing return to normal patterns of working with some mitigation measures still in place.

It was highlighted that the Council had been able to mitigate risks and maintain business continuity throughout this period. Adherence by staff to updated Covid risk assessments with additional protections had helped to ensure that, while there have been some individual cases of Covid within the workforce, there have been no outbreaks as defined by public health.

In response to questions from Sub-Committee Members, the Corporate Director explained that the Covid-19 vaccine is not mandatory and the Council cannot require staff to be vaccinated. However, the Council as an employer has actively promoted vaccination and the Staff Policy and has followed Government guidance.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee note the information presented in this report on the incidences of Covid in the Council's workforce since the pandemic began in March 2020.

20 Hybrid Working Policy

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the introduction of a Hybrid Working Policy for staff. The Managing Director introduced the report and the Corporate Director – Planning and Governance explained the main points. In summary, the Policy built on the best experiences of the past 18 months whilst also taking the learning from previous ways of working. If adopted, the Policy would replace the Council's Agile Working Policy.

The Policy was supported by the Trade Unions and the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee.

Officers responded to questions from Sub-Committee Members. The Corporate Director explained that the Policy will be reviewed after 12 months.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the Policy.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the Council's Hybrid Working Policy for staff set out at Appendix 1 and the consequential withdrawal of the current Agile Working Policy set out at Appendix 2.

21 Any Other Business

None.

22 Item Involving the Disclosure of Information

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.

23 Minutes (Exempt Items)

RESOLVED: That the minutes (Exempt items) of the meeting held on 26th July 2021 to be approved and signed.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. to 7.35p.m.