

PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD 13th July, 2007

The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. in Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre, Kendal Road, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Pam Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

Councillor M James was also in attendance to observe.

Officers: Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Officer
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

10. Employee Attendance 2006/07 – Annual Report (*Chief Personnel Officer*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the Council's performance in 2006/7 in relation to employee absence, future targets and to receive endorsement of actions proposed to achieve the targets.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report to the Portfolio Holder contained detailed information relating to employee absence in 2006/07. There had been a slight increase in the Council's overall sickness absence however a number of actions had been taken which would hopefully contribute to an improvement in sickness levels. Future years' indicators and targets and actions planned to achieve the targets set were also outlined.

The Portfolio Holder asked if Officers were confident given the range of measures put in place that a successful decrease in absence would be achieved. The Chief Personnel Officer said this would depend on individuals, there would be health problems but efforts would continue to be made to get staff back into work.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the Sickness Champions Group and asked if this would continue to meet. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that the group would meet and monitor the effect of its work plan. Quarterly reports to the Portfolio Holder would include information from this group.

Councillor James, Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee commented that more visual reports would be interesting; correlating holidays alongside sickness broken down into quarterly portions – she felt this would enable clearer judgements to be made. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that, on an individual basis, Officers are able to make assessment in this way but it would be virtually impossible to do this on a corporate basis.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the group were currently undertaking all she had suggested earlier; absences would continue to be monitored and it was hoped the range of interventions would have the desired effect.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the employee absence in 2006/07 and endorsed the future targets and proposed actions.

11. Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman in 2006/07 *(Assistant Chief Executive)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter which reviews the complaints received against the authority in 2006/07.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report gave details of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter reviewing complaints received about Hartlepool Borough Council in 2006/07.

The details of complaints handled in 2006/07, with comparative figures for the previous two years were attached as a table to the report, together with a copy of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter.

The Portfolio Holder referred to reference in the Letter to publishing of a special report in July about the difficulties that can be encountered with complaints when local authorities deliver services or discharge their functions through partnerships and it was agreed that a further report on this would come back to the Portfolio Holder and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the Ombudsman had been positive about the Authority's response rate.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

12. Workforce Development and Workforce Planning – 2006/7 Annual Report (*Chief Personnel Officer*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To advise the Portfolio Holder of the progress made and planned future actions in respect of the Workforce Development and Workforce Planning corporate activities and to advise of the work being undertaken to attract young people into careers in Local Government.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report to the Portfolio Holder indicated that in 2005 the Workforce Development Plan had been produced by Hartlepool Borough Council in response to the Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy. Significant progress had been made against the key actions, however this had been superseded by the Workforce Development Strategy 2007-2012 launched in April 2007. Workforce Development arrangements within the Council are coordinated corporately by the Workforce Development Team. Each Council Department has Workforce Development representatives who coordinate the training and development of employees and a strategic Workforce Planning group had been formed to ensure the actions within the strategy were delivered.

Elected Member development is coordinated via the Member Development Group, chaired by the Portfolio Holder. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Member Development Group would be meeting at appropriate times to consider necessary business, not strictly monthly as indicated in the report.

Details were given as to the progress made within the three parts of the Workforce Development Plan 2005 and of planned future actions. Employee monitoring information was also provided. A role description for the Workforce Development Departmental Representative and the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Workforce Planning Group were attached to the report as appendices.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the Table in paragraph 2.11 relating to age profile and indicated that she looked forward to the further information which would be included in the report referred to.

A further report was requested with regard to the actions listed in Paragraph 2.12 to try to attract young people. Such further information should include comparison of numbers for 2007 and previous years for modern apprentices, career pathways, joint working and other Council services eg Connexions, Regeneration and Planning etc. Councillor James commented that staff who give advice and guidance to young people should be trained to NVQ 3 standard.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the new Workforce Development Strategy 2007-2012 and asked how confident Officers are that all necessary actions had been planned. The Chief Personnel Officer explained that all the actions in the Strategy were within the Chief Executive's Service Plan and would be subject to regular monitoring and where relevant reported to the Portfolio Holder each quarter as part of the corporate performance monitoring arrangements. The Portfolio Holder asked for feedback to be provided on areas where targets may not be met and the Assistant Chief Executive noted this for action.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report and requested that her comments be noted / actioned.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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