

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 12 April 2021. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allan, Convener; Councillor Houghton, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cameron, Copland, Delaney, Graham, Hutchison, Macdonald and Reynolds.

Trade Union Advisers present:- Ron Constable and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); George Ferguson and Leslie Tarr (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 1 FEBRUARY 2021

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 1 February 2021 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the committee business planner as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reasons outlined in the planner for the delay to items 9 (re.cr.uit Scheme Update) and 15 (Annual Committee Effectiveness Report); and
- (ii) to note the business planner.

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REFERRAL FROM CITY GROWTH AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 3 FEBRUARY 2021 - £500 BONUS PAYMENT TO HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE STAFF

4. With reference to article 4 of the minute of the meeting of the City Growth and Resources Committee of 3 February 2021, the Committee had before it by way of referral, correspondence between Aberdeen City Council and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance in respect of a £500 bonus payment for key workers across local government. The City Growth and Resources Committee had referred the matter to the Staff Governance Committee in order to give the Members an opportunity to see, debate the response and consider any further representation, with input from the Trade Union advisers to the Committee.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) note the letter to the Minister for Local Government and Housing and the subsequent reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance;
- (ii) regret that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance fails to address the Council's request to fully fund a one-off £500 payment to all local government workers and call on the Scottish Government to reconsider this request;
- (iii) agree that the Scottish Government's continued underfunding of local government and inclusion of a Council Tax freeze for the year 2021-22, directly impacts on local government workers by constraining the ability of councils to fund additional payments to staff;
- (iv) agree the position adopted by Unison Scotland, GMB Scotland, EIS and Unite the Union Scotland who have all demanded that the £500 payment for NHS workers be extended to all workers in NHS, local authorities, and social care settings;
- (v) note the Scottish Joint Council Trade Unions representing local government workers in Scotland have rejected the pay offer from COSLA and are consulting their members on the way forward; and
- (vi) instruct the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Convener of City Growth and Resources Committee, to write a joint letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Minister for Local Government & Housing demanding a fair and just settlement for local government including for councils to provide the one-off £500 payment to reward the heroic efforts of all local government workers across Scotland showing that they are as equally valued as NHS and social care staff, and to fully fund local authorities to pay local government workers the pay rise they deserve.

Councillor Cameron, seconded by Councillor Copland, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee:-

- (i) note the letter to the Minister for Local Government and Housing and the subsequent reply from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance; and

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- (ii) take no further action at present due to the ongoing COSLA negotiations with Trade Unions in respect of Terms and Conditions.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (6) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Delaney, Graham, Macdonald and Reynolds; for the amendment (3) – Councillors Cameron, Copland and Hutchison.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree the motion.

INCREASE THE DISTRIBUTION OF NALOXONE – TEST OF CHANGE - RES/21/094

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which detailed operational plans to implement a “test of change” within identified priority geographical areas to a) increase Naloxone kits distributed to members of the public via Council services, b) increase the number of employees able to access Naloxone kits for distribution and c) seek volunteers from staff working in priority areas to undertake training to administer Naloxone to individuals suspected of drug overdose.

The report recommended:-

that Committee –

- (a) note the Improvement Project Charter attached at Appendix A; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer, People and Organisational Development, to report back to Staff Governance Committee, following the test of change, to indicate the lessons learned and any plans for further work and/or roll out.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development would take on board the comments around communication to staff, including making it clear that the training could be undertaken without any commitment to participating in the scheme, as well as the suggestion of a Q&A being prepared for staff who might be interested in volunteering;
- (ii) to note that consideration would be given during the test of change to the points raised around the inclusion of first aid training and any potential future allowance for those participating;
- (iii) to request that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development provide information in the report back to Committee on the number of occasions where Naloxone had been administered;
- (iv) to note that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development would discuss the involvement of Trade Unions in the ongoing work of the project, including whether a separate meeting could be set up on a monthly basis with Trade Unions to discuss the test of change; and
- (v) to approve the recommendations.

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RECRUITMENT UPDATE - RES/21/076

6. With reference to article 5 of the minute of the meeting of the Urgent Business Committee of 6 May 2020 and article 3 of the minute of the Staff Governance Committee of 1 February 2021, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided an update on workforce capacity developments across the organisation over the last twelve months.

The report covered three specific areas, namely:-

- An update on the temporary movement of staff scheme developed during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- An update on recruitment undertaken across the Council between May 2020 and December 2020; and
- An update on the development and implementation of the new re.cr.uit scheme.

It was noted that a full report in relation to the re.cr.uit scheme would be presented to the September meeting of the Committee.

The report recommended:-

that Committee note the progress made on each of the three areas covered within the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development would endeavour to provide further detail outwith the meeting on the reduction in FTE posts and the type of posts which may have been reduced, while noting this may not be possible due to the fluctuation in the number of posts as a result of, for example, service redesign; and to request that the above information also include figures in respect of the VSER figures for this year;
- (iii) to request that the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development circulate the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment which had been undertaken before the re.cr.uit scheme was introduced, as well as information on the number of employees who might be unable to access the scheme online and a breakdown where possible of whether these members of staff were in a particular service or age group, noting that the People and Organisation team were also supporting these members of staff to access the system; and
- (iii) to note the report.

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CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY - COM/21/079

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which sought approval of a revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy. The report noted that the Policy had last been approved by the Committee in 2018 and had therefore been reviewed to comply with the requirements for a new policy template. Certain sections had been worded differently and other additional detail, outlined in the report, added but it was noted that no significant changes were included.

The report recommended:-

that Committee –

- (a) approve the Corporate Health and Safety Policy as attached at Appendix A which from 1 May 2021 would replace the previous Policy; and
- (b) note that the Policy would be used as a training and development tool during the remainder of 2021.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE - OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2020 - COM/21/060

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which provided a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period October to December 2020 to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

The report recommended:-

that Committee note the report and provide comment on the health, safety and wellbeing policy, performance, trends and improvements.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

EAS UPDATE APRIL-DECEMBER 2020, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND ABSENCE UPDATE JULY-DECEMBER 2020 - RES/21/062

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided an update on utilisation of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provided by Time for Talking during the last 8 monthly period April 2020 – December 2020 as well as a 6 monthly update on the Occupational Health and Absence for the period July 2020 – December 2020.

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Members asked a number of questions around the data.

The report recommended:-

that Committee note the report and provide comment on the performance and trends.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

EQUALLY SAFE AT WORK EMPLOYER ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME - RES/21/092

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which advised of the outcome of the Council's participation in the Equally Safe at Work pilot employer accreditation programme. The report advised that the programme had been developed and run by 'Close the Gap', Scotland's national policy and advocacy body working on women's labour market equality, to address gender inequality and gender-based violence and had been piloted in seven 'early adopter' Councils, including Aberdeen City Council. The aim of the programme was to support employers in reviewing workplace culture and ensuring that policies and practices were enhanced to address gender inequality at work and prevent gender-based violence.

The report noted that the Council had been advised on 29 January 2021 that it had been successful in attaining the accreditation at the Bronze level, with the accreditation period beginning on 9 March 2021 and lasting two years until 9 March 2023.

The report recommended:-

that Committee note the content of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN - RES/21/077

11. With reference to article 6 of the minute of the meeting of the Operational Delivery Committee of 11 March 2021, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which set out the proposed approach to develop an equality, diversity and inclusion action plan for the Council taking account of the refreshed Equality Outcomes as agreed at the Operational Delivery Committee.

The report advised of two of the outcomes in relation to employment, namely:-

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- “Employer Outcome 1: Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on age, disability, ethnicity / race and sex.”
- “Employer Outcome 2: Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on age, disability, ethnicity / race, gender reassignment, sex and sexual orientation.”

To achieve these outcomes, an action plan had been developed to set out the Council’s detailed approach to equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer and this was appended to the report.

The report recommended:-

that Committee agree the approach to and implementation of the proposed equality, diversity and inclusion action plan for the Council as an employer.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

- **COUNCILLOR YVONNE ALLAN, Convener**