

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
27 March 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan, B. Meek,
G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin,
J.P. Moran, A. Smith, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. J. Croft, B. Hall, J.K. Piggott and G.W. Scott

OSC(1).42/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to submit.

OSC(1).43/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13th and 20th February 2007 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(1).44/06 HUMAN RESOURCES BEST VALUE REVIEW SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Organisational Development providing an annual update on progress on the implementation of the Human Resources Service Improvement Plan (SIP). (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report set out progress to date on the following key aims: -

- The development, implementation and review of a corporate Human Resources Strategy
- Implement Single Status across the Council.
- Flexible working arrangements
- Streamline information systems and procedures and improve management information
- Electronic service delivery options for HR/Payroll/Creditors
- Organisational development
- BV11a Percentage of top 5% earners who are women

It was reported that 12 of the 14 actions in the Service Improvement Plan were complete and the remaining 2 were under development.

As only two ongoing actions (covered by the Sickness Absence SIP) remained incomplete it was proposed that no further updates be provided.

Members questioned whether the electronic service delivery options for HR/Payroll/Creditors would assist in the management of sickness absence. It was explained that the 'Resourcelink' system enabled Managers to receive sickness absence reports on a monthly basis.

The Self Service module of the 'Resourcelink' system allowed employees to receive electronic payslips and access and amend their personal details online. This was being piloted in the Resources Department before being rolled out to other departments during May – September 2007.

In response to a Members question it was explained that although the Self Service module of the system would initially be made available to employees there was a facility to roll out the service to Councillors.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1. That progress made to date against the Service Improvement Plan be noted.*
- 2. That no further updates on the Human Resources Service Improvement Plan be provided.*

OSC(1).45/06 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BVPI 11(a)

It was explained that the Equality and Diversity Officer was present at the meeting to give a presentation in relation to the development of women within Sedgefield Borough – BVPI 11 (a).

The presentation covered the following: -

- Performance Indicator (PI) Definition
- Current Position
- Recruitment
- Leavers
- Consultancy Project
- Current Practices
- Future Developments

(For copy see file of Minutes).

It was brought to Members attention that performance at Sedgefield Borough Council compared favourably with other District Councils in the area. However performance at Unitary and County Councils was higher as they had a higher percentage of traditionally female dominated sectors such as Social Work and Education.

Concern was expressed in relation to employees gaining qualifications at Sedgefield Borough Council's expense and then leaving the authority. It was explained that staff from Sedgefield Borough Council had transferred to other Councils after gaining qualifications funded by the Borough Council. It was however pointed out that Sedgefield Borough Council had also employed staff that had gained their qualifications at other local

Councils. An employee would however be required to repay training costs if they left local authority employment within two years of gaining a qualification.

Members queried whether there were procedures in place to enable employees to raise concerns regarding their employment. It was pointed out that employees could raise concerns through the following:-

- Employee Development Programme
- Grievance Procedure
- Confidential Reporting Policy
- Dignity at Work Policies

Specific reference was made to job evaluation. It was pointed out that an impact needs assessment had been carried out to ensure that job evaluation had been fairly applied throughout the Council.

Members pointed out that there had been a perception that high numbers of staff had left the authority whilst at the same time difficulties had been experienced in recruiting staff, especially to specialist posts. It was explained that turnover of staff had been considered as part of the Review of Recruitment and Retention. Turnover was also monitored as a Local Performance Indicator.

With regard to part time working it was noted that flexible working and job share was available for all posts within the Council including senior management positions.

It was requested that the Committee receive an update on the progress towards BVPI 11 (a) – Percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women – in 12 months.

- AGREED:**
1. *That the information be noted.*
 2. *That a progress report on achievement of BVPI 11(a) – Percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women - be included on the Committees work programme for 12 months.*

OSC(1).46/06 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members reviewed the current work programme.

It was reported that both the review of Sickness Management and Inform had been completed.

The Committee agreed that a progress report on the achievement of BVPI 11(a) - Percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women) - be included on the work programme for 12 months.

AGREED:

1. *That a progress report on achievement of BVPI 11 (a) – Percentage of top-paid 5% of local authority staff who are women - be included on the Committees work programme for 12 months.*
2. *That the Committee's work programme as outlined in the report be agreed.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. L. Walker Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4237 email lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk