

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021 at 4.00 pm

In the Town Hall, Walsall

Committee Members present: Councillor M. Bird (Chair)
Councillor N. Gultasib
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor R. Martin (Substitute for Councillor S. Elson)
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor K. Sears (Substitute for Councillor S. Samra)
Councillor V. Waters

In attendance: Dr H. Paterson, Chief Executive
Mr N. Gordon, Senior Human Resources Advisor –
Human Resources Operational Services
(Item 5/Minute No 60/21 only)
Mr S. Gunther, Director of Public Health
(Item 5/Minute No 60/21 only)
Ms M. Leith, Director of Human Resources,
Organisational Development & Administration
Mr I. Sutheran, Human Resources Manager –
Recruitment & Transactional
Ms C. Williamson, Specialist Project Manager – Public
Health (Item 5/Minute No 60/21 only)
Mr N. Picken, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Dr P. Fantom, Democratic Services Officer

55/21 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors A. Andrew, S. Elson and S. Samra.

56/21 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor R. Martin substituted for Councillor S. Elson and Councillor K. Sears substituted for Councillor S. Samra.

57/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

**58/21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
(AS AMENDED)**

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item set out in the private agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

59/21 MINUTES

A copy of the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 June, 14 and 26 July and 12 August 2021 was submitted [Annexed].

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 June, 14 and 26 July and 12 August 2021, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

60/21 RECRUITMENT POLICY RELATING TO PENSION SCHEMES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

A report was submitted on recruitment policy relating to pension schemes for Public Health and Health Practitioners [Annexed].

The report, which sought an amendment to the Council's pension policy to include the NHS Pension Scheme for 12 (11.14 full-time equivalent) designated posts in Public Health, was introduced by the Director of Public Health, Stephen Gunther. He advised the Committee that, due to the nature of the recruitment market for particular roles in Public Health, with these positions being situated almost exclusively within the NHS, it had been difficult to attract experienced staff when seeking to recruit for these roles within the Council.

The Director of Human Resources, Organisational Development & Administration, Michele Leith, pointed out that this was attributable to the current requirement for new entrants to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, which was perceived as being detrimental to those moving from the NHS when they had long service and had accumulated significant benefits from their membership of the NHS Pension Scheme. Therefore, by making the NHS Pension Scheme available for these designated posts, the Council would be able to attract and retain appropriately experienced staff to these key roles, thereby assuring stability and delivery of service. Mr Gunther also stated that this would enable the Council to bolster its health protection, especially given the impact of the global pandemic.

The Chair expressed a concern that this could introduce a disparity between existing members of staff and the new entrants, whom it might be perceived were being recruited on more advantageous terms, and he sought reassurance that the trade unions had been consulted on this matter. In response, Mr Gunther advised that this had been undertaken as a part of the engagement.

Further to paragraph 14.1 of the report, which stated that there was no formal consultation requirement associated with this proposal, Councillor Martin enquired whether any concerns had been raised during the engagement process.

With reference to the earlier comments of the Chair, Ms Leith confirmed that the proposal did not affect all Public Health Staff and that only a limited number of positions would be offered the opportunity to continue to have membership of the NHS Pension Scheme. She noted that most staff would not wish to join the NHS Pension Scheme and that it would only be beneficial to entrants who had accrued pension service with that scheme.

The Senior Human Resources Advisor – Human Resources Operational Services, Neil Gordon, informed the Committee that having regard to whether the proposal would be equitable to existing staff, advice had been sought from both the Council's Pension Officer and from Legal Services. He clarified that the proposal, which sought to resolve a specific recruitment issue, would only be associated with designated roles and, therefore, that it was not required or intended for other members of staff to join an alternative pension scheme. In terms of whether the proposal could create any issues regarding equal pay or inequality, for which there would be a responsibility for in statutory right, the legal advice had confirmed that this was not the case.

Resolved:

1. That permission be granted for Public Health (via the Council's Pension Officer) to request a Direction Order for the provision of the NHS Pension Scheme for designated roles in Public Health, and representing 12 (11.14 full-time equivalent) posts, as follows:
 - Public Health Consultant
 - Senior Health Protection Practitioner
 - Health Protection Practitioners
2. That, subject to the approval of the request for a Direction Order, a statement specifying that the NHS Pension Scheme applies be included in future advertising for the designated roles.

Mr Gordon, Mr Gunther, Ms Leith and Ms Williamson left the meeting following this item of business.

61/21 PRIVATE SESSION

Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That, during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Committee consider that the item for consideration is exempt information for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 and accordingly resolved to consider the item in private.

Public Summary of the matters considered in private session.

62/21 RECRUITMENT TO THE POSITION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES & TRANSFORMATION (S151)

The Committee considered a report submitted on recruitment to the position of Executive Director of Resources & Transformation (S151).

Resolved:

1. That the officers be authorised to extend the contract of the current Interim Executive Director of Resources & Transformation (S151) to the end March 2023;
2. That a further report be presented to the Personnel Committee during 2022 in order to commence the recruitment process for appointment to the permanent position of Executive Director of Resources and Transformation (S151).

(Exempt information under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) (As amended).

63/21 MINUTES – PRIVATE SESSION

A copy of the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 26 July, and 12 August 2021, was submitted [Annexed].

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 and 26 July, and 12 August 2021, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

(Exempt information under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) (As amended).

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 4.24 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....