

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Foley, D. (Chairman)
Sutton, Mrs. H.M. (Vice-Chairman)

Cooper, Miss J.	Johnson, T.B.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Lyons, Miss O.
Dudson, A.	Sutherland, M.
Dudson, Miss M.J.	Woodhead, P.E.
Grice, Mrs. D.	

INVITEE: Councillor J.T. Kraujalis (Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader)

8. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors P.D. Startin and P.A. Snape.

9. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

10. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

11. Scrutiny Review – Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Members considered the Gender Pay Gap information as included with the agenda (Item 4.1 – 4.42 of the Official Minutes of the Council) and received a presentation from the HR Services Manager, which covered the following:

- Key areas for discussion;
- What is the Gender Pay Gap?;

- Common Misconceptions about the Gender Pay Gap;
- What is CCDC's Gender Pay Gap?;
- Pay Split across the Organisation;
- How do we compare to other Local Authorities?;
- Stafford Borough Council's Pay Gap for 2017;
- Pay Split across Stafford Borough Council;
- How do we compare nationally?
- What can we do to further reduce the Gap?
- Conclusion.

A Member queried if the salaries of CCDC Officers were comparable with those of officers at other local authorities in the West Midlands region. The HR Services Manager replied that whilst no formal comparator data was in place, ad-hoc benchmarking could be undertaken when necessary. The Council did however have tools in place it could use to try and increase interest in specific vacancies.

A Member then queried what the Council could do to increase the number of women employed in 'technical' roles. The HR Services Manager replied that it was important to encourage more females to apply for such roles in the first place. Methods at the Council's disposal to try and do this included use of the Apprenticeship Levy, apprenticeships more generally and promotion of flexible working arrangements. A new round of recruitment for apprentices was due to start soon, so the areas targeted through adverts could be widened to try and attract more interest.

A Member then asked what was currently being done to 'upskill' lower-paid female workers. The HR Services Manager replied that the Apprenticeship Levy was being used to help upskill those female employees who wished to do so. It had however been a struggle to attract interest in this offer due to the time commitment required. Furthermore, active consideration was being given about how best to cover succession planning in employees' annual Performance Development Reviews (PDR), as this would help the Council to plan for the future and encourage employees to apply for higher level roles.

A Member then asked how many apprentices were employed at present. The HR Services Manager replied that approximately nine were currently in post across different services. Those employed by Housing Maintenance had recently finished, but fresh recruitment for the department was due to take place soon. Typically, there were three to four apprentices employed each cycle.

A Member then asked if proactive work was happening to advertise apprenticeships and other vacancies to women. The HR Services Manager replied that where able to do so, the Council had representation at local jobs fairs, and aimed to promote the Council more generally. The same Member then commented that conversations could be held via online portals with women's groups about where they usually looked for employment opportunities. The HR Services Manager replied that this was something the Council already did to seek disabled candidates, so it could be considered for attracting female candidates and others who had 'protected characteristics'.

A Member then queried if all employees undertook PDRs each year. The HR Services Manager replied that all employees should have one annually, and the completion rate was very high. PDRs were especially useful for those employees who worked in a non-office environment.

The same Member then queried if the 2018 Gender Pay Gap report was available yet. The HR Services Manager replied that the report was currently being worked on, but collating the necessary data was a complex process. It was aimed to finalise the report by late 2018/early 2019 and then undertake further analysis compared against the 2017 report.

The Committee noted and accepted the information as presented, and thanked the HR Services Manager for the presentation and accompanying reports.

12. Quarter 2 2018/19 Corporate Priority Delivery Plan Update

Members considered the latest performance information for the 2018/19 Corporate Priority Delivery Plan (PDP) (Item 5.1 – 5.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services took Members through the actions detailed in the PDP, providing progress updates where necessary.

In respect of ICT security, a Member commented that he had raised with Officers on a number of occasions the issue of councillors having to change their account password every 28 days, and the difficulties associated with using two-factor authentication to login to the Council's network. The Head of Governance Corporate Services replied that these were requirements of the Council's ICT Security Policy, to which all Members signed up to after being elected. Additionally, a new version of the Members' Portal had been designed, with the aim of making it easier for Members to access papers for meetings etc. Any concerns raised by Members about the existing structures in place would be fed-back to the Head of Technology.

13. Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2018/19 Work Programme Update

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the updated work programme (Item 6.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council) and sought their views on which topic should be selected for review at the March 2019 meeting of the Committee.

Members' Access to Electronic Information

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services commented that if Members were happy, the scope for this review be widened to include looking at induction and training for Members, in advance of the next round of District elections due to take place in May 2019.

Corporate Communications

A Member queried if the remit of this review could be extended to include how the Council could help 'hard to reach' groups to access its services and what support could be provided as part of that help. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services replied that this review topic was about how the Council promoted itself

to service users and the wider public. In respect of 'hard to reach' groups, the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy covered how to access such groups when necessary. Furthermore, the Customer Services team also had a role to play in helping such groups access the Council's services.

Environmental Services Review

This matter had not been included as a potential item for review by the Committee, but a Member queried if the Committee would be able to undertake any pre-decision Scrutiny whilst the review was underway. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services replied that as Cabinet had directly tasked Officers to undertake this piece of work, it would be difficult to get Scrutiny involved with this review. Furthermore, the timescales involved with completing the review would not make it practical to seek Scrutiny's views prior to a final report being submitted to Cabinet.

(Councillor P.E. Woodhead left the meeting at this point and did not return.)

Technology Strategy and its impact upon the Council's 'back office' services

A Member commented that the focus of this topic should be changed to look at how 'smart' the Council was in dealing with its residents and service users through the availability of current and new technologies.

A vote was then taken on the proposed topics and a majority of Members voted to include the expanded 'Members access to information' review on the agenda for the March 2019 meeting of the Committee. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services advised that as a Task & Finish Group had already been agreed for this review, meetings with relevant Members would be arranged in due course.

The meeting closed at 5:12 p.m.

CHAIRMAN