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Contact Officer: Steve Copley Tel. 01484 221000

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SUB COMMITTEE

Monday 28 April 2014

Present: Councillor Sheard (in the Chair)
Councillors Calvert, Marchington and Pandor

In Attendance:

Steve Copley – Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer
Rosemary Gibson - Head of HR
Luke Ricketts – HR Manager
Alison O’Sullivan – Director of Children and Adults
Ruth Redfern – Director of Communities, Transformation and Change

Darren Crowe - UNISON
Cath McHendry- UNISON
Graham Paisley - UNISON

1 Membership of Committee

Apologies for absence noted on behalf of Cllr Nicola Turner. Cllr Andrew Marchington substituted for Cllr Nicola Turner

2 Minutes of previous meeting – 25 June 2012

The minutes of the Sub Committee on 25 June 2012 were approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the public

It was agreed that item 7 be considered in private

5 Deputations and petitions

There were no deputations or questions

6 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED – That, acting under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as specifically stated in the under mentioned minute)

7

Social work in Kirklees

(Exempt information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a member of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the Authority. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness in the Council's decision making)

The Sub Committee convened to receive and consider oral and written submissions from UNISON and the Management Side in relation to the work of social workers in Kirklees.

The discussion focused on the following issues, following previous discussions between UNISON and the Management Side in the Central Negotiating Team in December 2013.

- * Staffing levels in the social work teams, including the use of agency staff
- * Parity with the grades and grading of social work staff, including the use of market rate supplements
- * The payment of disturbance allowances
- * The payment of professional fees

Consideration of these issues had been referred to the Employee Relations Sub Committee at the request of UNISON.

RESOLVED – That in response to the issues raised in today's meeting, the Sub Committee would:-

(1) Ask the Management Side to prepare a report for Cabinet on the concerns and questions raised about caseloads and staffing levels in the social work teams in Kirklees, including the figures and questions surrounding the use of agency staff, and how these caseloads and staffing levels compare with other local authorities.

(2) Be reluctant to change the Council's current grading scheme and accepts that the Management Side does have to use some "market rate supplements" to recruit and retain staff for some key posts. However, as the problem of recruiting and retaining social work staff for some posts is a common problem for all local authorities in West Yorkshire, the Sub Committee reaffirmed the advice from CNT and would ask the Management Side to discuss the matter at a West Yorkshire level to see what solutions can be identified.

(3) Confirm that travel and disturbance are separate and that different rates apply – travel and fuel rates respectively. However, the Management Side should clarify the HMRC basis of how the fuel rates are being calculated; noting that if the HMRC fuel rate has changed then the new rate should be applied. Management were also asked to provide evidence

on the origin to the statements on “15p per mile” for fuel, which is causing some confusion for managers and staff.

(4) Confirm that the approach taken with regards to the payment of professional fees fits within the existing policy. However, the Sub Committee would ask the Management Side to prepare a fuller report for Cabinet to review the current policy on the payment of professional fees for staff across the council looking forward from 2014/15 onwards, including information on the costs and implications for the Council and its services if the policy were to be changed.