

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Present: Councillor Shabir Pandor (Chair)
Councillor Paul Davies
Councillor Donald Firth
Councillor David Hall
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Susan Lee-Richards
Councillor Naheed Mather
Councillor Cathy Scott
Councillor John Taylor

1 Membership of the Committee

Councillor Sokhal substituted for Councillor McBride.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was noted that all agenda items would be considered in public session.

5 Deputation/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

7 Update on Recruitment Challenges

The Committee received a report which provided an update on current recruitment challenges, and the mitigation strategies which were being put in place to address the challenges.

The report provided the context of the national labour shortage and the impact of that locally, which had exacerbated difficulty in recruiting, particularly in certain service areas. Appendix 1 to the report set out a statistical comparison of post leavers in 2020 and 2021, along with figures reflecting an increase in early retirements.

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The Committee were advised that recruitment had continued throughout the pandemic, and that, while there was an increase in the volume of applications received for most jobs, which was now subsiding, there had not been a noticeable increase in applications for roles which were difficult to fill. Appendix 2 to the report set out information on recruitment activity comparator data for 2020 and 2021. It was noted that difficulties in recruiting to posts that were traditionally difficult to fill, including social care and social work, were exacerbated by current labour market trends.

The report reflected upon the success of the Council in recruiting a large number of covid community support officers to support the pandemic response and advised that a project was currently underway to support the retention of officers.

With regards to addressing the challenges ahead, Appendix 3 to the report set out pathways into engagement and work that had been achieved through support into employment initiatives. The Committee were advised of a project to develop and embed a consistent approach to workforce planning, which would be initially piloted in hard to recruit areas, prior to being rolled out further. Information was also provided as to the refresh of the People Strategy, which was about to be launched and would focus upon the outcomes of (i) healthy and well people (ii) being an inclusive employer of choice (iii) having highly skilled, flexible and engaged people and (iv) effective and compassionate leadership.

The Committee noted the content of the report, and discussion took place in regard to (i) current numbers of vacancies (ii) application of the flexible retirement policy (iii) use of exit surveys (iv) making KMC an employer of choice, and enhancing conditions to help achieve this (v) the need to increase the range of opportunities for existing employees and (vi) the utilisation of job fairs to attract employees.

The Committee were advised that there were currently 153 candidates in the pre-employment screening process and that work was taking place to reduce the current recruitment process, which took an average of 90 days. It was noted that overall there were approximately 8,800 employees, not including those employed within local authority schools.

It was agreed that a meeting be convened in approximately 4 months time to receive a further update on the number of vacancies, the work undertaken to progress the mitigation strategies as set out in the report, and further information on the Project SEARCH intern scheme.

The Committee were also provided with an update on appointments within senior management and it was noted that the recruitment process for the posts of Service Director – Culture and Visitor Economy and Service Director – Skills and Regeneration was now complete. Approval was sought to progress the post of Service Director – Highways and Streetscene to advert.

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RESOLVED -

- 1) That the recruitment and retention challenges faced by the Council, as set out within the report be noted, and that the actions and strategies to address these challenges be endorsed.
- 2) That approval be given for a recruitment process to be undertaken for the post of Service Director – Highways and Streetscene.