

# EMPLOYEE ISSUES FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 17 August 2021

**Chair:**

Councillor Isobel Dorman

**Councillors Present:**

Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Jim McGuigan

**Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor Joe Lowe

**Attending:**

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

G Bhatti, Employee Development and Diversity Manager; H Calley, Administration Officer; C Lyon, Administration Officer; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services; E Maxwell, Human Resources Business Partner

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## 1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

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## 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Employee Issues Forum held on 18 May 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Head of Personnel Services referred to a question raised by Councillor Hamilton on why there had been such a rise in accidents/incidents over the period within Social Work Resources at the previous meeting and provided an update.

**The Forum decided:** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

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## 3 Council-wide Workforce Monitoring – April to June 2021

A report dated 12 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following Council-wide employee information for the period April to June 2021:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers, exit interviews and labour turnover
- ◆ recruitment monitoring
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 13 March 2021

In response to a question from Councillor McAdams on whether there was currently a recruitment freeze on Care Worker posts, the Head of Personnel Services advised that there was no recruitment freeze from Corporate Personnel, however, she would contact Social Work Resources and feed back to members.

Councillor McGuigan requested further details on the reasons for veterans not attending interviews. The Head of Personnel Services advised that she would look into this matter and feed back to Councillor McGuigan.

**The Forum decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2021 (Paragraph 3)]*

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#### **4 Community and Enterprise Resources – Workforce Monitoring – April to June 2021**

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A joint report dated 12 July 2021 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Social Work Resources for the period April to June 2021:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ Staffing Watch as at 13 March 2021

Councillor McAdams enquired about the Planning Service responding to members' enquiries. The Human Resources Business Partner advised that she would raise this issue with the Planning Service and feed back to Councillor McAdams.

**The Forum decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 5 February 2019 (Paragraph 4)]*

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#### **5 Employability in South Lanarkshire – Kickstart Scheme Progress**

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A report dated 5 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Council's involvement with the UK Government's Kickstart Scheme.

The UK Government launched the Kickstart Scheme in October 2020 with a view to mitigating the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment and training opportunities of young people aged 16 to 24 years of age who were in receipt of Universal Credit.

The Scheme focused on employers and if they took on an eligible young person in a new post, would be offered funding for 26 weeks of paid work experience at the national minimum wage rate. It was hoped that the experience would lead to longer term employment or training opportunities.

The Scheme operated using Host organisations and Gateway organisations. A Host offered Kickstart places within its own organisation and a Gateway acted as a broker for other employers in the area. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) acted as the first point of contact and all vacancies were advertised via job centres and referrals by Work Coaches.

The Council had been successful in its applications to become both a Kickstart Host, with up to 50 places and 350 places as a Gateway.

The maximum value of payment for each placement was up to £7,648.80 per participant for both Host and Gateway grants. Payments were made via the Council as participants achieved specific milestones in their placements. For placements in the public sector, wraparound funding had been used to top up the hourly rate to the Living Wage rate.

There were currently 9 young people appointed to roles within the Council, with 16 in the process of being interviewed/recruited. There had been 28 young people appointed to placements with employers throughout South Lanarkshire, with a further 29 placements shortlisted for interviews. There were currently 14 jobs advertised and a further 50 in process.

The length of time in paid placement had been extended for some placements using the Youth Guarantee Programme fund from the Scottish Government. This wrap around funding had been aimed at providing extended placements for those young people who needed a little more support, or where there had been significant initial training required to carry out the role.

As a consequence of lockdown, the Scheme had not commenced until April 2021 and there had been indications that the Scheme would be extended beyond December 2021.

Labour market statistics showed that, as the Job Retention Scheme concluded, those over the age of 25 would require employability support and the Council was refocussing other funding to address the needs of this group.

**The Forum decided:** that progress to date on the Kickstart Scheme be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee of 17 March 2021 (Paragraph 10)]*

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## **6 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.