

Northwards Housing – HR & Equality Sub-Committee Meeting

Hexagon Tower
Tuesday 27th February 2007 at 7.30pm

Chair: Martin McKevitt

Present: Fatima Adamjee Board Member
Ade Alao Board Member
Joan Fitzgerald Board Member
Martin McKevitt Board Member

In Attendance: Steve Wood (SW) Director of Business Services
Lisa McBurnie (LMcB) Human Resources Manager
Tara Kelly (TK) E&D Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Sue Pemberton and Robin Lawler.	
3	Declarations of Interest / Confidential Matters / Equality & Diversity Matters Arising There were no confidential matters or declarations of interest to note. Equality & Diversity matters were noted on specific reports.	
4	Minutes of Last Meeting held on 30th January 2007 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct and accurate record.	
5	Matters Arising Item 11 - Progression towards Equality Standard Level 2 TK reported on progress towards achieving Level 2 and following recent meetings, confirmed that there seem to be only a couple of monitoring issues that required resolving.	

	<p>She reported that, after some further work, she would come back with a report to a future meeting on how Level 3 might be achieved.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the progress and the report.</p>	TK
6	<p>Absence Performance</p> <p>LMcB reported on present Absence Performance which did not look very good at all. In the last month or so, absence had doubled and was currently standing at 8.3 days.</p> <p>LMcB reported that it was still possible that the organisation would come in on target of 10 days but it was now tight and that there had been an increase in the number of long term sickness cases. February had been a particularly bad month.</p> <p>After a few questions, Sub-Committee noted the report.</p>	
7	<p>Work and Families Act 2006</p> <p>LMcB updated Sub-Committee with proposals to make changes to maternity pay following the new law that had come in during 2006.</p> <p>The proposal was to alter Northwards' policy to create two tiers that would mirror the Council's present arrangement, allowing for an additional 4 weeks at 90% pay, bringing the number of weeks to 12, rather than 8 after 1 years service. LMcB commented that this was about staff retention and should be seen as a positive staffing proposal, rather than an additional cost.</p> <p>MM commented that should the proposal be approved, Northwards should look at promoting the revised scheme and getting some publicity out of the change. AA asked about Union consultation and LMcB confirmed that this would take place in the appropriate way.</p> <p>Sub-Committee approved the proposals in the report for the extended time for pregnant employees to comply with legislation and aid retention within the organisation for employees who are pregnant.</p>	LMcB
8	<p>Investors in People</p> <p>LMcB reported that previously officers had reported to Sub-Committee that the organisation would look to apply for Investors in People in March 2007.</p> <p>Work was continuing on creating evidence, but the conclusion that had been reached as a result of all the new initiatives that were going on showed that more time would be required to allow these to</p>	

	<p>embed themselves within the organisation and to ensure that the evidence produced would be correct. These included the staff survey, revised appraisals, leadership development and 360 degree feedback. LMcB therefore reported that the officers were recommending a revised date of September 2007 for the Investors in People application.</p> <p>MM asked about the pre-assessment weaknesses that had been previously identified and how these matters had been progressed. It was suggested that a diagonal slice of the organisation should meet on a quarterly basis to provide feedback on progress. AA asked whether there were changes to the training plan that could be demonstrated as a result of appraisals and LMcB explained how the development from appraisals was translated into the plans. AA expressed his approval for the 360 degree process that all managers would be following and how useful this was as a tool.</p> <p>After some discussion, it was agreed by Sub-Committee that it was appropriate to delay the date for Investors in People application but Sub-Committee asked for regular reports to come through in order that changes could be tracked.</p>	LMcB
9	<p>Business Plan</p> <p>The updated organisational section of the Business and Delivery Plan 2007-2012 had been circulated with the agenda and Sub-Committee were asked if they had any comments.</p> <p>It was agreed that the word “training” should be changed to learning and SW was asked to review the Area Panel remit and the TUPE arrangements paragraphed to ensure that they were properly representative of the organisation now, rather as it had been a year ago.</p> <p>With these suggested amendments, Sub-Committee noted that the full Business and Delivery Plan 2007-2012 would come back to the Board at the March meeting.</p>	SW
10	<p>Board Core Training and Development Programme</p> <p>Sub-Committee considered an updated Board programme for Training and Development that had been prepared by the Governance Support Officer.</p> <p>After some discussion, it was agreed that it might be appropriate to swap the Value for Money and the Equality and Diversity Training round, on the basis that the Board had previously received Equality and Diversity Training in 2006.</p> <p>AA asked if Risk Mapping could be re-titled as Risk Management.</p>	SW SW

	<p>Sub-Committee also asked about the study visit on 7th June and whether this clashed with a further training session on 12th June. SW said he would discuss this with the Governance Support Officer prior to the report coming back to the Board.</p> <p>It was noted that Board appraisals should continue and the idea of a Board away day was discussed. AA spoke about some of his thoughts as to how the day might be used on gaining an overview, as well as providing some future direction and the ability to spend some time working together. It was agreed that AA would discuss this with the Chief Executive.</p> <p>With the proposed changes noted, Sub-Committee recommended that the Board Core Training and Development Programme be approved by the Board.</p> <p>Recommendation to the Board: That the Board approve the Board Core Training and Development Programme.</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>AA / RL</p>
11	<p>Job Evaluation</p> <p>SW provided Sub-Committee with an update on progress with the Job Evaluation exercise. He commented that progress had been unfortunately slow, although work was continuing in relation to reviews of Job Descriptions. The computer model had now been purchased and the analyst was being trained with a view to interviews commencing shortly. The results of the Surveying and Technical Job Evaluation exercises by the Council had still not been received.</p> <p>AA asked a question about how unsettling the situation was on staff and LMcB commented that the organisation had lost some of the momentum, although it was intended that communication would continue. Line Manager Forums were being set up to cascade the information working on family groups and this was seen as an extremely positive process.</p> <p>After a few further questions, Sub-Committee noted the report.</p>	
12	<p>Training</p> <p>There were no training items noted from items that had been discussed at the meeting.</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business for Sub-Committee to consider.</p>	

14	Date of next meeting The next meeting of the Sub-Committee would take place on Tuesday 27th March 2007 at 7.00pm . Martin McKeivitt's apologies were noted for this meeting. With thanks to everyone for attending, the Chair brought the meeting to a close at 8.10pm.	