

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE  
HELD BY TEAMS ON FRIDAY, 22 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT

County Councillor J M Williams (Chair)

County Councillors E Durrant, D Jones-Poston, D R Jones, F H Jump, DW Meredith,  
P C Pritchard, G W Ratcliffe, L Roberts, L Skilton, D A Thomas and J Williams

<b>1.</b>	<b>ELECTION OF CHAIR</b>
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**RESOLVED that County Councillor Michael Williams be elected Chair for the ensuing year.**

Councillor Williams expressed his condolences to Councillor Phil Pritchard on the death of his partner. He also remembered John Bevan a greatly respected member of the HR team who had passed away.

<b>2.</b>	<b>ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR</b>
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**RESOLVED that County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones be elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.**

<b>3.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor E Roderick who was on other Council business.

<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 as a correct record. County Councillor Pritchard abstained as he had not been at the last meeting.

Matters Arising

The Head of Workforce and Organisational Development advised that 84.5% of staff appraisals had been completed and that some Heads of Service were quality checking a random sample of appraisals. From March 2022 this would become more formalised through using the Council's payroll system, which enables managers to review the quality of appraisals.

<b>5.</b>	<b>VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE HEAD OF WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
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The Committee received an update from the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development and the Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

The Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager outlined the work being undertaken to improve the mental and physical health of employees during lockdown including live exercise classes. A lot of work had been undertaken to ensure that school buildings were safe and Covid secure and the team was working with Corporate Property to ensure that risk assessments for buildings were in place. Staff were still being encouraged to work from home in line with Welsh Government guidance. There was an online confidential counselling service in place and the occupational health service was supporting staff with the effects of long Covid.

The Head of Workforce and OD reported according to the most recent statistics available for sickness rates in local government, on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the average sickness rate was 5%, with the rate in Powys currently standing at 4.6%. As of the date of the meeting, 266 staff were on sick leave, 118 absent due to Covid related reasons, of which 36 members of staff were shielding. At one stage 261 staff had been furloughed and £567,000 had been reclaimed from the government so far, with 63 being furloughed at the end of Quarter 3. Circa 160 staff had been recruited to the contact tracing team both for Powys and for providing mutual aid for other local authorities and Welsh Government.

County Councillors Emily Durrant, David Jones, Francesca Jump and Phil Pritchard left the meeting to join the Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee.

The Head of Workforce and OD reported that following a fall in recruitment levels for the first six months of the pandemic, 518 new staff had been appointed since September and a similar number moved internally. He also advised that the first apprentice had been appointed under the new apprenticeship scheme the previous week. There was a large pool of young people looking to join the Council through the apprenticeship scheme in entry level jobs as and when they became available.

On appeals he advised the Committee that the trade unions were able to raise any issues in twice weekly meetings and that managers were being encouraged to resolve any minor conduct or grievance issues through supervision and mediation where possible rather than go through formal processes. For the roll out of the vaccination programme, the Council had encouraged staff to volunteer to assist the programme and had seen a healthy response from staff. The Head of Workforce and OD offered to speak to colleagues in PTHB and PAVO to see what the Council could do to address any shortage for volunteers in the ongoing programme.

**County Councillor J M Williams (Chair)**