



SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING: 28 April 2011, Lanark Sheriff Court.

Present:

Mark Higgins, Non Executive Member, SCS Board (Chair)
Johan Findlay, Non Executive Member, SCS Board
Sheriff Nikola Stewart
Jean Lindsay, Director HR, Forestry Commission
Eric McQueen, Executive Director Field Services, SCS
Alan Swift, Director HR, SCS

Also Attended:

Eddie Burrows, TUS
Karen Lawrie, Secretariat Support Team, SCS, (Minutes)

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee to Lanark Sheriff Court.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 24 February 2011

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. Action Points and Matters Arising

3.1 There were no matters arising which would not be discussed elsewhere on the Agenda. All action points were cleared.

4. Untaken Annual Leave (SCS/PC/Apr11/10)

4.1 The Committee noted the data provided regarding untaken annual leave for the financial year 2010/11. The Committee requested an annual update showing the levels of untaken annual leave.

Action: Alan Swift to provide the Committee with an annual update of untaken annual leave.

4.2 It was noted from the data that staff in Glasgow had high levels of annual leave carry over. Eddie Burrows reported staff frustration regarding their ability to use their annual leave allowance. A working group had been created in Glasgow Sheriff Court to address the issues.

Action: Eddie Burrows to advise the Committee, at the October meeting, of the findings of the working group investigation on annual leave issues in Glasgow Sheriff Court.

5. Draft HR Business Plan 2011/12 (SCS/PC/Apr11/11)

5.1 The HR Projects 2010/11 progress tracker was reviewed by the Committee. It was noted that a number of projects had been completed. Of the projects still requiring action, Alan Swift advised that they had either been deferred or were currently under review. Although the staff handbook required updating with regard to SCS structures, the policies it referred to were broadly similar. The availability of access to all policies on-line made the availability of an up to date handbook less critical.

5.2 The details of the HRU Business Plan 2011/12 were discussed. Alan Swift explained that key performance indicators (KPIs) were used to measure, quarterly or annually, the performance of HRU. The results were published on the staff Intranet.

Action: Alan Swift to circulate the published KPI measures to the Committee prior to the next meeting to allow them to be used as a tracker for the future.

5.3 It was also noted that HRU had received a Customer Service Excellence accreditation and that a key factor in this had been consultation with customers on the KPIs, and publishing and explaining performance against them.

5.4 The Committee discussed the subject of staff working past the current retirement age. Alan Swift advised that there are now higher numbers of people employed on zero hours contracts.

5.5 Alan Swift advised that a strategy for dealing with Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment would be developed following issues raised in the 2010 staff survey. The publication of the dignity at work policy for all members of staff may have increased staff knowledge on this subject, which was then reflected in the survey results.

5.6 SCS had an established Bullying and Harassment team in place to assist staff with any issues or concerns.

5.7 It was noted that the main way of dealing with issue of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace was likely to be effective local management.

Action: Jean Lindsay to forward to Alan Swift details of a training course run by the Forestry Commission to assist managers in giving difficult messages to staff.

6. HR Policies: Committee's Role (SCS/PC/Apr11/12)

6.1 The Committee discussed its proposed role for reviewing HR policies and were content with the recommendations in principle subject to a slight amendment. It was agreed that point 2 of the recommendations should be amended to "strategic change".

Action: Alan Swift to circulate to the Committee updated wording of the Committee's Role prior to the August meeting

7. Attendance Management (SCS/PC/Apr11/13)

7.1 Proposed changes to the SCS Attendance Management policy, taking account of HR Best practice and legislation, were summarised and discussed.

7.2 The Committee was content with the proposed changes.

8. People Strategy (SCS/PC/Apr11/14)

8.1 Alan Swift advised that a programme had been established to develop the new People Strategy 2012/15. Workshops would be facilitated by specific HR staff for each of

the five work strands. Each work strand will have a workshop for the senior group, manager group and HR/TUS group to ensure that different perspectives were captured.

8.2 The results of the workshop would be reported to the Committee prior to being presented to the SCS Board in December.

8.3 The Committee was content with the proposed work plan.

Action: Alan Swift to provide a report for the Committee detailing the results of the work strand workshops for the October meeting of the Committee.

9. Technical Training (SCS/PC/Apr11/15)

9.1 The Committee was advised by Alan Swift that most staff in SCS worked on the frontline and were required to understand court processes and terminology. A report submitted to the Committee reviewed the training delivery structure introduced in 2008.

9.2 The report had eight recommendations, seven of which had received approval from SCS Executive Team. The Committee discussed the recommendations and were content with the suggested improvements. It was noted that there were still issues being encountered by staff, such as late notice of legislative changes and the distances travelled by staff to attend courses.

9.3 The eighth recommendation would result in SVQs becoming mandatory for staff however this formed part of a longer term programme for SCS staff learning. Many staff take part in SVQs voluntarily with a presentation ceremony to 'celebrate their success' held every year.

9.4 The Committee was advised of the existence of a further education budget managed by HRU which was available annually to staff for non-SCS learning such as MBA courses, undertaking legal degrees or even learning foreign languages as a route back into general learning.

10. Developing Management Capability (SCS/PC/Apr11/16)

10.1 Alan Swift advised the Committee that, in response to the staff survey, a coaching programme for senior and middle managers had been planned. This would commence at the Senior Managers Conference on 1 June, which would be facilitated by an external coaching expert.

10.2 All those involved in the programme would receive a letter from the Chief Executive explaining the importance of this initiative. Following the full rollout of the programme it would then continue on a rolling basis to ensure that all new managers receive the training and that all those who received this training would attend refresher courses.

10.3 The Committee agreed with the proposed way forward and noted the linkage with the plans to tackle the perceived levels of bullying, harassment and discrimination.

12. Mainstreaming Equality (SCS/PC/Apr11/17)

12.1 The Committee discussed the approach to mainstreaming equality in SCS and was content with the proposed creation of an Equality Steering Group.

13. Any Other Business

Pay and Reward

13.1 This item was discussed outwith the presence of the TUS representative.

13.2 The Committee's recommendation on annual leave would be presented to the SCS Board on 6 May.

13.3 Eddie Burrows rejoined the meeting.

14. Date of the Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting would take place on Thursday 25 August 2011, Edinburgh Sheriff Court.