



SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: Thursday 24 February 2011 in Saughton House, Edinburgh

Present:

Mark Higgins, Non Executive Member, SCS Board (Chair)
Johan Findlay OBE JP, 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
Lisa Sellars, Head of HR Business Partnering, SCS (Items 4, 5, 6 and &7)
Stephen Coulter, Director Planning & Performance, SCS (Item 10 only)
Gordon Ellis, Sherifffdom Business Manager, SCS (Item 10 only)
Fiona Duncan, Project Manager, Mainstreaming Equality SCS (Item 10 only)
Colin Lee, Director, Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations
(Item10 only)
Margaret Peattie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCS, (Minutes)

Apologies:

None

The Chair welcomed Sheriff Stewart and Jean Lindsay to their first meeting of the Committee.

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 29 October 2010

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising

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

3. Pay and Reward

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

3.2 The Committee's recommendation on annual leave entitlement had been submitted to the SCS Board and the Chair reported on the outcome of that discussion.

3.3 The Committee discussed the current arrangements for annual leave and how untaken leave was managed. The Executive would prepare a report on untaken leave across the SCS for the next meeting.

Action: Alan Swift to provide a report on untaken leave across the SCS for the next meeting.

3.4 Since the last meeting, further discussions had taken place with the TUS in relation to pay and reward. The last SCS pay agreement had now expired and new proposals would be submitted to the Scottish Government's Pay and Remuneration Committee by July this year.

3.4 The Committee heard an update on the Voluntary Redundancy exercise being undertaken within SCS. Final decisions would be taken before the end of March.

3.5 Eddie Burrows rejoined the meeting.

4. HR Business Plan – RAG Report (SCS/PC/Feb11/01)

4.1 The Committee considered the latest report which highlighted the key elements of the HR Business Plan and development programme.

4.2 Concern was expressed that leadership and management programmes had not made progress. Alan Swift and Eric McQueen were due to meet and discuss priorities. Some development programmes were already in place but a steer from the operational side of the organisation would assist in developing a programme to meet current needs. Releasing people to attend courses was an issue and some forward planning was necessary. The Committee expressed its desire to see progress on projects where action was required.

4.3 Work was underway to develop a learning and development strategy and the Committee would be provided with an update at the next meeting. Technical training was a greater priority for those working in courts, particularly in relation to new legislation and system development. A technical training report had been submitted to the SCS Executive Team and this would be on the Agenda for the April Committee meeting.

Action: Alan Swift to provide an update on leadership and management programmes and bring the Technical Training report to the April meeting for discussion.

5. HR Policy Compliance Assessment (SCS/PC/Feb11/02)

5.1 Lisa Sellars advised that HR developed and updated policies in consultation with the TUS and with due regard to employment legislation. There was an issue around local managers referring matters to HR rather than implementing the policies themselves. The HR Customer Service Excellence focus group reviewed new policies to ensure they were user friendly and HR Business Partners would provide local managers with coaching and support where required but it was agreed that managers should be encouraged to implement policies at local level.

5.2 The Committee noted that the policy and guidance on managing poor performance had been revised. A copy would be circulated to Committee members.

5.3 Benchmarking and workforce planning would be brought before the Committee once the outcome of the voluntary redundancy exercise was known. Alan Swift would discuss the content of this report with the Chair.

6. People Strategy 2008-11 – Projects & Activities (SCS/PC/Feb11/03)

6.1 Progress on projects arising from the People Strategy was considered and it was noted that a programme of secondments had not been developed. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea in principle but recognised that there were difficulties in establishing a formal programme with other organisations.

6.2 The Committee heard that HR and Field Services Directorate would set up a working group involving operational managers to develop the People Strategy 2012-14, which would be informed by the SCS Corporate Plan. It was agreed that the focus

should be on 5 or 6 key priorities which should be fully costed for scrutiny by the Committee at the autumn meeting.

6.3 It was suggested the Committee might have a workshop session with the People Strategy working group and this was agreed.

Action: Eric McQueen/Alan Swift to discuss a workshop session on the People Strategy involving the Committee and the operational managers' group.

7. Paternity Leave Entitlement (SCS/PC/Feb11/04)

7.1 The Committee noted the likely impact for SCS of changes to paternity leave. Further consideration would be given to this at a future meeting when more information was available.

8. Equal Opportunities Policy (SCS/PC/Feb11/05)

8.1 Changes had been made to this policy to take account of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Committee found it to be both comprehensive and clearly set out.

9. Policy Update (SCS/PC/Feb11/06)

9.1 The report was noted. The Attendance Management policy was being revised to simplify disciplinary procedures associated with certain types of absence and discussions were being held with the TUS. A copy of the policy would be circulated to the Committee.

Action: Alan Swift to circulate the Attendance Management policy (and related Equality Impact Assessment) to the Committee highlighting proposed changes.

9.2 Clarification was sought on the Committee's role in scrutinising revisions to existing policies, particularly after the Executive had undertaken consultation and agreement had been reached with the TUS. If scrutiny was confined to strategic direction and statutory compliance, then only a short note on changes would be required. It was agreed that the Chair would more clearly define the Committee's role on policy development.

Action: Chair to define the Committee's role and process for scrutinising changes to existing policies.

10. Mainstreaming Equality (Presentation and paper SCS/PC/Feb11/08)

10.1 Gordon Ellis led the presentation describing the aim of the Mainstreaming Equality Project Board (MEPB) and the statutory responsibilities imposed on SCS by the Equality Act.

10.2 The equalities statement and guidance developed by the MEPB was based on three themes:

- employment;
- service provision; and
- positive promotion of equality,

and had been informed by input from colleagues within SCS and also external groups, including equality experts, and public consultation.

10.3 An equalities impact assessment process and tool had been developed and was being applied to all new policies and activities which affect people and customers. Policies and activities which were being reviewed were also subject to equality impact assessment and amended in light of any evidence of potential bias or discrimination emerging from scrutiny of the impact assessment process.

10.4 An action plan had been developed setting out areas for improvement in the quality of consultation, involvement and information gathering and this would be published on the SCS website. An independent Equalities Advisory Group (EAG) had been established to provide advice and insight on general and specific equalities issues.

10.5 The Committee endorsed the work of the MEPB and commended it for ensuring SCS's readiness to meet its statutory responsibilities. It also endorsed the continuation of equality and diversity across the organisation and mainstreaming equality as an employer, service provider and in its positive promotion.

10.6 During discussion, Colin Lee expressed the view that the role of the EAG should be defined. Its establishment gave perspective, drive and focus to the work, providing a forum for meaningful dialogue and recognising change in the organisation.

10.7 The Chair thanked members of the MEPB and Colin Lee for providing an informative presentation and discussion on this important work. Eric McQueen would provide a short paper for the next meeting summarising how the action plan was being taken forward.

Action: Eric McQueen to provide a short paper for the April meeting reporting progress on the Mainstreaming Equality Action Plan.

11. Staff Survey (SCS/PC/Feb11/07)

11.1 The SCS Board had asked the Committee to consider the outcome of the recent staff survey. This had been undertaken as part of a UK-wide civil service benchmarking exercise.

11.2 The Executive had identified three corporate priorities in response to feedback from the survey and an action plan was now in place. The Committee considered that while this was largely an appropriate response, further emphasis should be given to dealing with issues around developing management capability including consideration of national and local issues. The Committee also expressed concern that 15% of staff had specified in the survey that they had personally experienced bullying or harassment with a further 8% preferring not to say. It was agreed that a more detailed analysis in response to the survey be fleshed out in a paper for submission to the Board.

Action: Executive to prepare a paper on management capability and development for consideration by the Committee and submission to the SCS Board.

12. Any Other Business

Appointment of Deputy Chair

12.1 It was proposed that the Committee should appoint a Deputy Chair to allow meetings to proceed as scheduled in the event that the Chair was unable to attend. Johan Findlay had agreed to take on this role and the Committee endorsed her appointment.

13. Date of Next Meeting

13.1 Thursday 28 April 2011, venue to be confirmed.