



MINUTES

SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE PEOPLE COMMITTEE

MEETING: 7 February 2013, 1A PARLIAMENT SQUARE, EDINBURGH

Present:

Mark Higgins, Non-Executive Member, SCS Board, (Chair)
Johan Findlay, Non-Executive Member, SCS Board (Deputy Chair)
Jean Lindsay, Non-Executive Member (external)
Elaine Noad, Non-Executive Member (external)
Julie Ward, Non-Executive Member (external)
Cliff Binning, Interim Executive Director Field Services, SCS
Alan Swift, Director HR, SCS

Also Attended:

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

Apologies:

Sheriff Nikola Stewart, Non-Executive Member (external)

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 Two new members of the Committee, Elaine Noad and Julie Ward were welcomed and introduced to other members.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 15 November 2012

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.

3.2 Outstanding action points were cleared or updated.

• ***Eddie Burrows to advise the Committee, of the findings of the working group investigating annual leave issues in Glasgow Sheriff Court:*** the Glasgow Partnership Group (GPG) have not met since the last People Committee meeting. The matter will be on the agenda for the next GPG meeting and the Committee will be updated on the findings.

4. Staff Survey 2012 (SCS/PC/Feb13/01)

4.1 The findings of the SCS Staff Survey 2012 were analysed by the Committee. From the commencement of participation in the surveys in 2010 the Committee acknowledged the trend of improvement SCS has shown, particularly the increased participation by staff and also the engagement index of 58%.

4.2 It was noted that comparative analysis with other Civil Service organisations showed that SCS figures were in line with the civil service median.

4.3 Concern was raised at the level of perceived bullying and harassment and discrimination although it was noted that the number of grievances lodged was low in comparison.

4.4 The two year pay freeze which has been imposed under public sector policy for all staff earning over £21000 accompanied by the increase in pension contributions has also had an impact on perception of staff benefits.

4.5 The Committee were assured by the Executive that previous feedback from staff regarding communications from the Executive Team would be taken in to account when the full survey results are disseminated.

Action Point: Executive to provide an update to the Committee on actions taken by the Executive Team and Senior Managers to address the results of the Staff Survey when the Committee meet in August.

Action Point: Executive to provide the Chair with a draft report from the Committee to the SCS Board.

4.6 The TUS advised that there were no surprises in the survey results. They acknowledge that levels of pay is something that is of great importance to staff but also that it is something that the Executive are unable to alter in the current climate. They also feel that benefits such as the Carers policy provide great assistance to staff.

5. Dignity at Work – Bullying and Harassment and Discrimination response in the SCS Staff Survey (SCS/PC/Feb13/13)

5.1 The Executive advised that following the last staff survey actions had been taken with regards to Dignity at Work (DAW) issues which had included engagement with the TUS. Corporate activity had picked up pace in 2012 with messages being issued to staff, development and roll out of e-learning packages and a new DAW hub on the staff intranet.

5.2 The Coaching programme which has been undertaken by all Senior Managers is now being rolled out to first line managers. It is hoped that following the training staff will have the confidence to deal with DAW issues whilst being aware of how their behaviour is being perceived.

5.3 It was noted that internal recruitment is currently underway for new members of the DAW Contact Team who will be distributed throughout each of the Sherifdoms.

5.4 Following a discussion regarding the perception and interpretation of bullying and harassment at all levels of staff it was agreed that SCS needs to ensure that managers are confident to tackle DAW situations quickly. It was noted that the DAW Project Board was developing proposals on this matter and it was agreed that the Committee would wish to be kept advised of progress.

Action Point: The Executive to work with the DAW Project Board to further develop the action plan to address bullying and harassment issues in SCS highlighting actions that can be taken to reduce the instances reported in the staff survey. The action plan to be circulated to Committee Members in March 2013.

6. HR Project Tracker (SCS/PC/Feb13/02)

6.1 The Project tracker was reviewed and discussed by the Committee. They agreed that good progress had been made with wide ranging projects. It was noted that the Investors in People project was now complete as the final report had been submitted.

Action Point: Executive to ensure the Investors in People report received in December 2012 is available for Committee members to discuss at the next meeting.

6.2 The Committee questioned why performance appraisal was not on the progress tracker. The Executive advised that following a recent senior managers' conference a greater emphasis is being made on the time spent completing the interim & final reports and the quality of the reporting. Time management is a contributing factor to the quality of the reporting, however this has apparently been overcome in one Sheriffdom and this can be used as a model for others.

Action Point: The Executive to report on the scheduling of performance appraisals focussing on Tayside, Central and Fife as an example. Consideration should also be given to the addition of performance appraisals to the Progress Tracker for 2013/14.

7. HR Risk Register (SCS/PC/Feb13/03)

7.1 The Committee reviewed the HR Risk Register paying particular attention to the wording of the risks and risk priority with and without controls.

Action Point: Executive to review the risks currently on the register and update the wording and controls where necessary. The risks will be considered further at the next meeting.

7.2 The possibility of SCS introducing a Car Leasing scheme for staff was discussed. Committee member gave examples of good and bad points from similar schemes they had been involved in. A paper will be submitted to the Executive Team in February for consideration.

Action Point: Executive to prepare a paper for the Committee for the April meeting with detailed information on the proposed car leasing scheme should the Executive Team give approval to further scoping work being undertaken.

8. Pensions Auto Enrolment: Progress Report (SCS/PC/Feb13/04)

8.1 Following discussion at the last meeting and the paper outlining the steps being taken by SCS the Committee were content that SCS is ready for the implementation of Pensions Auto Enrolment.

9. SCS Facility Time Arrangements (SCS/PC/Feb13/05)

9.1 The TUS facility time arrangements were discussed outwith the presence of the TUS representative.

9.2 The facility time arrangements will be further discussed by Scottish Government HR Directors who will meet collectively with the TUS on 8 March 2013.

Action Point: If the discussions on 8 March result in changes to the facility time arrangements in SCS a paper detailing the changes, should be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting.

10. Use of Zero Hours Contracts in the Sheriffdom of GH&I (SCS/PC/Feb13/06)

10.1 The use of zero hours contracts by SCS was discussed. Concerns were raised regarding the use of these types of contracts and their potential for unfairness with issues such as annual leave, pension contributions and implications with the DWP if the regularity of work is significant. A possible solution would be the introduction of annualised contracts.

10.2 The Executive advised that zero hours contracts primarily used by retired staff who wish to have the option to work on an ad hoc basis. It is also a benefit when skilled workers can be called on to cover holidays and sick leave as it relieves pressure on staff in those locations. Data on usage in 2012/13 will be published later in August 2013 in the HR Annual Scorecard allowing a further review by the Committee

Action Point: The Committee to receive an update following the publication of the report investigating the key areas of use of zero hours contracts.

11. SCS Recruitment Audit (SCS/PC/Feb13/07)

11.1 At the previous meeting the Committee requested sight of the Recruitment Audit compiled by the Civil Service Commissioners regarding the SCS recruitment process.

11.2 Although, because of the delegated nature of recruitment in the SCS, the report assessed recruitment as medium risk it was noted that overall it had been concluded that SCS has established a sound infrastructure upon which to base compliant recruitment and selection. The Commission were pleased with the controls in place for the individuals carrying out recruitment campaigns however there were concerns raised at the poor records keeping in some campaigns. Eight recommendations were made by the Commissions, some of which have already been taken forward, the remainder will be taken forward although not all fully because in some cases the SCS felt that the recommendations were not consistent with the business needs of the organisation. For example the recommendation to withhold job offers until full security disclosure was obtained for candidates would extend recruitment times beyond what would be acceptable.

11.3 Committee members were keen that more should be done to support 16-24 year olds. The Executive advised that a work placements trial via job centres in Edinburgh had been successful with a further trial taking place in Glasgow. A Skills for Justice Apprenticeship was also in the pipeline although this was awaiting funding.

11.4 Due to the annual sign off on the recruitment compliance by the CEO of SCS, the Committee discussed it's inclusion on the HR Risk Register.

Action: The Executive to consider the addition of Recruitment Compliance to the HR Risk Register.

12. Training & Development Investment (SCS/PC/Feb13/08)

12.1 This matter was carried forward to the next meeting.

13. OPG Attendance Report (SCS/PC/Feb13/09)

13.1 The Committee were content that the SCS Senior Management had a framework in place to tackle the various issues which have given rise to the sickness absence in OPG.

Action Point: The Committee would like to revisit the OPG attendance report in 2014 to review the levels of absence.

14. Report on Poor Performance & RIDDOR cases in August 2012 HR Annual Scorecard (SCS/PC/Feb13/10)

14.1 The report on poor performance was noted by the Committee. An update on the two employment tribunals that are currently taking place was reported to the Committee.

14.2 Concerns were raised regarding the time taken for action to be instigated against poor performers and also the number of instances where action taken had been withdrawn due to errors in the creation of poor performance reporting.

14.3 The Committee were satisfied that the majority of cases were being dealt with appropriately and that policies and guidance are in place to assist managers.

14.4 It was agreed that any papers submitted to the Committee should not contain names of individuals.

15. HR Policy Update (SCS/PC/Feb13/11)

15.1 This matter was carried forward to the next meeting.

16. HR Measures presented to December 2012 SCS Board (SCS/PC/Feb13/12)

16.1 This matter was carried forward to the next meeting.

17. Any Other Business

17.1 There were no further matters for discussion.

17.2 Next meeting will be on 15 April 2013 in 1A Parliament Square, Edinburgh.