

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 10 DECEMBER 2015

**Present:** Councillor Terry (in the Chair);  
Councillors Davies (for Page) and Gavin.

**Also Present:** R Hall and K Magee (for items 16 to 20); W King,  
I Wardle and S Poole.

**Apologies:** Councillors Lovelock, Page and Skeats

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 1 October 2015 and 23 November 2015 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

#### 17. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Managing Director submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 19 November 2015.

**Resolved - That the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting be received.**

#### 18. CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report providing the Committee with details of the procurement process to be undertaken in order to put in place a contract for an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and to seek delegated authority to award a contract.

The report explained that as part of the policy on the wellbeing of staff the Council needed to have an EAP service in place that included counselling, online help and advice, debt counselling, legal and financial services for employees, their families and elected Members. The cost of the current contract with Optum was £30,000 per annum and had been in place since October 2003, but would expire on 31 March 2016.

The report stated that HR had consulted with HR colleagues from other local authorities to ascertain the possibility of a collaborative procurement process for the provision of an EAP service but this was not possible as some used in-house counselling services and others were already part way through their contracts.

The report also explained that HR proposed to use a framework agreement from Crown Commercial Service (CCS). There were four suppliers for EAP services on the framework and it was HR's intention to conduct a mini-competition in accordance with the terms and conditions of the CCS framework agreement, to procure an appropriate service. The mini-competition would be conducted using CCS's e-sourcing portal and the award criteria would be based on the further competition procedure identified within the terms and conditions of the CCS framework agreement (RM932).

**Resolved - That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to enter into**

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a contract for the provision of an EAP provider for a period of eighteen months.

### 19. LIVING WAGE - 2015 RATE

Warren King submitted a report to update the Committee on the new Living Wage (LW) rate and to seek agreement to delegate the authority to implement the new rate of pay.

The report explained that the Council's Pay Policy stated that eligible staff should receive as a minimum either Spinal Column Point (SCP) 11 or the Living Wage rate (whichever was the higher). The UK Living Wage rate was set annually by the Living Wage Foundation and calculated by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University and updated each year to take account of rises in living costs and any changes in what people defined as a 'minimum'. It also took some account of what was happening to wages generally, to prevent a situation where LW employers were required to give pay rises that were too far out of line with general pay trends.

The report explained that the LW was announced annually in November and had to be implemented within six months. The new value of the LW was £8.25 per hour which, for the first time, was above the rate paid by the Council for staff currently employed on SCPs 11 (£7.88 per hour) and 12 (£8.05 per hour). However, the Joint Trade Union Side had submitted a pay claim for 2016/17 which could increase SCPs 11 and 12 to match the LW, but the outcome of the NJC pay award might not be known until after the required LW implementation date of 1 May 2016.

The report also stated that initial scoping suggested that there were 950 posts that would benefit from the Living Wage rate, almost half of which were in schools and so a decision would be required before the next meeting of the Committee to build an allowance into budgets to reflect the higher rate of pay.

The report proposed that one option was to pay a 'Living Wage Supplement' to those staff on SCP 11 and SCP 12 of £0.37 and £0.20 respectively to uplift their hourly rate to £8.25 per hour with effect from 1 April 2016. This supplement could be reduced, or removed entirely, once the outcome of the NJC pay award was known.

**Resolved - That the Managing Director and HR/Payroll Services Manager be given delegated authority to implement the new Living Wage rate from 1 April 2016.**

### 20. CHILDREN'S SERVICES UPDATE

The Managing Director tabled a Children's Services update. He explained that this was an interim update and that a full report would be submitted to Policy Committee in January 2016. The current focus was the stability of the workforce and locums had been employed as a temporary measure to ensure that there were sufficient experienced staff to cover the current workload.

There had been significant progress in improving management capacity with the recruitment of seven new Social Workers and eight newly qualified Social Workers on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme. New Heads of

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Service for Early Help and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had been appointed and an offer had been made to a Head of Children's Safeguarding. In addition, the contract was being finalised for the new Director of Children's Services.

It was also reported that there had been a reduction in the number of staff submitting resignations, and negotiations had resulted in some retractions, which retained valuable knowledge of local families.

There had been an excellent response to the Switching to Social Work campaign and 10 staff would be commencing the Open University course in January 2016.

A six week Next Stage Plan had been introduced to ensure momentum around the changes required in Children's Services and this had been complemented by monthly staff conferences. There was a perception that there was a new vision of purpose for Children's Services from staff and it had been suggested that a Staff Council and Forum be established to give staff the opportunity to challenge management and suggest improvements. The focus of the Next Stage Plan would be the timeliness of assessments, a reduction of individual caseloads and the re-establishment of a thresholds document that would ensure a consistent approach across all partnership agencies.

A review of staffing levels was being undertaken along with a restructure proposal to help with capacity, linked with savings options and work on the recruitment and retention of staff.

**Resolved - That the gratitude of the Committee be relayed to Wendy Fabbro for her additional work as Acting Director of Children's Services and for adding a sense of calm and purpose to the Service.**

### **21. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved -**

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

### **22. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES (INCLUDING VOLUNTARY RELEASE SCHEME APPLICATIONS)**

The Interim HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out a request for two terminations of employment on the grounds of redundancy.

The proposals, together with the financial implications, were set out in a schedule appended to the report on the following basis:

- The financial case was given which represented the highest cost to the Council. In most cases this included discretionary added years on pension (where

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payable), as this represented a direct and ongoing cost to the Council. This was in accordance with the Council's current practice of considering redundancy and retirement terms up to the maximum limit of discretion, where applicable. The Committee was asked to approve individual proposals subject to a maximum ceiling on the exercise of discretion;

- The financial implications were costed on the basis of the estimated figures, which were subject to final confirmation. The figures might be affected by changes to final salary, pensionable service, age or date of leaving. The Committee was asked to approve the proposals on the basis of the estimated figures, subject to any individual proposal being brought back to Committee if the confirmed costs were more than 10% in excess of those reported;
- The costs of early retirement on the grounds of ill health were met by the Local Government Pension Scheme or the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

The report sought approval for the payment of a compensation package in the case of proposed termination of employment or early retirement on grounds of redundancy, efficiency of the service or ill health subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with employees and their representatives, and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate.

### Resolved -

- (1) That the termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employees A and B be approved on the terms set out in the schedules appended to the report subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with the employees and their representatives and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate;
- (2) That the proposal set out in (1) above be approved on the basis of the financial implications set out in the report, and that authority to conclude the proposal be delegated to the Head of Finance, Monitoring Officer and HR and Payroll Services Manager (acting jointly) within that framework, and subject to the maximum ceiling identified for the proposal;
- (3) That the current terms for agreeing compensation packages in specific cases of early retirement or termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency be confirmed.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.52 pm).