

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors David Absolom, Page and Terry.

Also Present: W King and A Barker (for items 1 to 3); K Magee (for items 1 to 4).

Apologies: Councillor Skeats.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2 March, 16 March, 15 May and 4 July 2017 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Chief Executive submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 2 March 2017.

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

3. KENNET DAY NURSERY FEE INCREASE

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services, submitted a report providing the Committee with details of the Kennet Day Nursery's budget for 2017/18 and proposed an increase in fees for the Nursery from September 2017.

The report explained that the last proposal to increase fees had been in August 2016 and had required the nursery to run on a self-funding basis with a zero budget build. To achieve this, a consistent 85%+ occupancy level was required throughout the year. In the 2016-20 budget proposals it had been agreed that the Nursery would be required to achieve a profit and in the financial year 2017/18 the Nursery would need to make a surplus of £20,000 which would increase to £30,000 for 2018/19.

Changes in Government policy from September 2017 would result in working parents of three to four year olds in England being eligible for 30 hours of free childcare rather than the current 15 hours for 38 weeks of the year (term time). Families working over 16 hours a week with children of this age would be eligible for this if:

- Their child would be aged 3 or 4 years old when the scheme started;
- Both parents had to be working, or the sole parent was working in a lone parent family;
- Each parent earned, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage;
- Each parent had to have an annual income of less than £100,000;
- The family lived in England.

Parents would be eligible to apply for both the 30 hour scheme and the Tax-Free Childcare scheme through a joint online application that was being developed by HMRC, this was because the eligibility requirements for both schemes were aligned.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

The report proposed that the Nursery fees be increased by 2% from September 2017 and included a table that compared prices for local day nurseries within the vicinity.

The crèche service at the Nursery currently offered nursery users an opportunity to add, subject to availability, additional ad-hoc hours to sessions allowing them to attend meetings, appointments and other commitments that fell outside of their 'booked' sessions. The report proposed that the crèche ad-hoc hour rate be increased from the current £6 per hour to an £8 charge for all users. This hourly charge had remained at this rate since 2012 when the service had been introduced.

The report explained that the fine for 'lateness' was custom and practiced in the childcare sector and the late fee rate of £5 had been in place for over 20 years. There were not many occasions when this fee was applied and parents were always given an opportunity to appeal by email within five working days. However, it was considered that this fee now required a review to cover additional staffing costs that were incurred when staff were required to wait with the child and it was proposed to increase the fee to £10 for the first 15 minutes and £25 thereafter.

Resolved -

- (1) That the fee structure for the Kennet Day Nursery be increased by 2% to apply from September 2017 as follows:**

£217.65 per week - £43.53 per day (RBC Users)

£238.75 per week - £47.76 per day (Non RBC Users)
- (2) That the current discount of £2 a day for siblings continue unchanged throughout the year and the current additional charge of £2 a day for children under two years continue unchanged;**
- (3) That the 'crèche' ad-hoc hourly rate be increased from the current £6 per hour to an £8 charge for all users;**
- (4) That the additional charges for users who had 'late fines' be increased from £5 to £10 for the first 15 minutes and £25 thereafter.**

4. WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of Whistleblowing activity over the previous twelve months.

The report explained that at the 17 July 2014 meeting of Personnel Committee (Minute 4 refers) a revised Whistleblowing Policy had been approved which had replaced the earlier version that had been introduced in 2000. The Council was committed to the highest possible standard of openness, honesty and accountability and in line with that commitment, officers were encouraged, if they had serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It had been recognised that certain cases would have to proceed on a confidential basis and to support this a Whistleblowing Policy had been introduced.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

Since the beginning of 2016 there had been ten recorded cases of Whistleblowing and a table was included in the report that provided an anonymised summary of Whistleblowing Activity.

Resolved - That the overview of Whistleblowing Activity be noted.

5. 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 paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

6. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES

The Interim HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out twelve requests for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy; one request for flexible retirement; and one request for early retirement.

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 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 report sought approval for the payment of a compensation package in the case of the proposed termination of employment on grounds of redundancy, subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters, including ongoing consultation with the employee and their representatives, and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate.

Resolved -

- (1) **That the dismissal of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employees A, B, D, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L, the early retirement of**

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

employee C and the flexible retirement of employee E 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 Paragraph 1).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.43 pm).