

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 19 NOVEMBER 2015

### Present:

Councillors David Absolom (for Cllr Page), Debs Absolom (for Cllr Gavin), Lovelock and Steele

Ms J Boyd	National Union of Teachers (NUT)
Mr K Magee (Chair)	Unite
Mr W King	Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager
Mrs S Poole	Committee Services

### Apologies:

Councillors Gavin and Page

As the meeting was inquorate on the Union side, it was agreed that each item on the agenda would be discussed and noted by the Local Joint Forum.

### 1. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2015

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 15 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 2. RELOCATION SCHEME, ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE AND RELOCATION SCHEME FOR OVERSEAS SOCIAL WORKERS

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report informing the Forum of updates to the Council's Relocation Scheme and the Relocation Scheme for Overseas Social Workers and of the introduction of an Accommodation Allowance. A copy of the Relocation Scheme was attached to the report at Appendix 1a, a copy of the Directorate Management Teams (DMT) Relocation Framework was attached to the report at Appendix 1b, a copy of the Accommodation Allowance was attached at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Relocation Scheme for Overseas Social Workers was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report stated that the Council faced recruitment difficulties in key service areas and other areas where it was nationally difficult to recruit and so had updated existing policies and introduced new incentives as part of the Reading Offer to ensure that there were sufficient suitably qualified staff and to reduce the number of interim and agency workers that covered essential and other services.

The report outlined the amendments to the Schemes as follows:

#### Relocation Scheme

- More clarity about which posts the scheme applied to. The Council's financial position meant that this benefit would only be attached to posts defined by Directorate Management Teams and Governing Bodies, with Headteachers, using a consistent framework, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1b;

- The introduction of a maximum cap of £8,000, being £5,000 for house purchase or rental fees and £3,000 for settling in expenses which was in line with many other local authorities;
- Changes to the eligibility so that the staff member had to be living more than 50 miles away from their designated work location and moved within 25 miles. This was a change from the current scheme whereby the staff member would have to live within the Borough to get 100% of the financial benefit, with 75% being paid if they lived within 15 miles. This change was to reflect the need to travel due to high property prices and rental costs in Reading.

#### Accommodation Allowance

The Accommodation Allowance was a new proposal to provide an allowance that could be used to assist with mortgage or rental costs for selected posts. As with the Relocation Scheme, Directorate Management Teams/Governing Bodies and Head Teachers would approve which posts would be eligible for the allowance, prior to a job advertisement. To claim, the new member of staff would need to be living more than 50 miles away and then move within 25 miles of Civic Offices/designated work location.

The allowance would be for a three year period on a sliding scale with £300 per month paid for the first year, £200 per month for the second year and £100 per month for the third year.

#### Relocation Scheme for Overseas Social Workers

The proposals for this scheme were a revision of an existing policy by updating terminology and cross-referencing to the Accommodation Allowance proposal. One of the benefits under this scheme was the allowance of an additional £1,000 to be claimed to assist overseas social workers with expenses such as flight costs, luggage or visa checks.

The report explained that members of staff would need to sign a legal agreement to repay a proportion of any financial assistance if they left the Council within three years. This would be reduced to one year for overseas Social workers, unless they also made a claim against the Accommodation Allowance.

**AGREED:** That the report be noted.

### **3. ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PAY PROGRESSION**

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report that provided an analysis of Teachers' Pay Progression to establish whether part time, female and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff were treated equitably in receiving incremental progression.

The report explained that at the meeting on 25 June 2015 (Minute 5 refers) Trade Union colleagues had asked Human Resources to undertake an analysis of

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incremental progression by Teachers in the Council as there had been some suggestion at a national level that part time teachers were less likely to receive an increment than full time teachers.

The report stated that data analysis had been based on 608 school teaching staff who had been employed in Community Schools in the Borough on 31 August 2015, with some adjustment for leavers, people who were already at the top of their scale, on the Upper Pay Spine or who had joined the School Direct Scheme and those that had moved from unqualified to qualified status.

The findings were as follows:

Category	% received an increment
Female	57.06
Male	52.17
Full Time	55.36
Part Time	63.33
Asian/Asian British	45.45
Black/Black British	16.66
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	100
White British	55.64
White English	100
White Irish	n/a
White - Other White	69.23
Mixed - Other Mixed	n/a
Other Ethnic Groups	n/a
Not Recorded	65.95

The report explained that this data suggested that there was little variation in the likelihood of teachers receiving an increment whether they were male or female (females were slightly higher). Similarly, there was little difference between full time and part time teachers (part time teachers slightly higher).

Whilst the figure for Black/Black British suggested a relatively low percentage receiving an increment, this was based on a very small statistical sample (six teachers), but this would be monitored by Human Resources.

It was noted that these figures were based on a partial return as information had not been received from all schools and did not include academies. It was assumed that the percentages receiving an increment would increase across all categories once a complete data set had been received.

**AGREED:** That the report be noted.

**4. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, reported that they were currently commencing a re-tendering process for the Employee Assistance Programme as the current contract would end in 2016.

He explained that this programme offered a counselling and signposting service for staff, Councillors and their families but that the new contract might exclude Councillors and family members as the Council had received advice from HMRC that extending the service beyond staff members could be deemed to be a taxable benefit.

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.15 pm).