

## 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.

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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 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.

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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

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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).

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 12 OCTOBER 2017

**Present:** Councillor Lovelock (Chair);  
Councillors David Absolom, Livingston (in place of Councillor Page), Skeats and Terry;

**Also Present:** W King and P Sloman;

**Apologies:** Councillor Page.

### 7. PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES AND DENS

Further to Minute 20 of the meeting held on 8 December 2016, the Chief Executive submitted a report that set out proposals to strengthen the senior management structure of the Corporate Support Services Directorate and the framework and timetable for the review. A family tree setting out the proposed structure for the Directorate of Resources was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that key objectives of the review had been to strengthen the corporate centre and build capacity to take forward the authority's transformation process to deliver significant budget savings and other changes across the whole Council and to make direct appointments to senior management posts in place of current interim appointments. A new post of Director of Resources would be established in place of the Strategic Director of Finance, and would be filled by competitive external recruitment. This post would be the Council's Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Director would have responsibility for all services in Finance and Corporate Support Services and five Head of Service posts would report to the Director, as follows:

- Head of Customer Care and Transformation;
- Head of Finance;
- Head of Human Resources;
- Head of Law and Governance;
- Head of Procurement and Contracts.

The posts of Head of Human Resources and the Head of Procurement and Contracts were new posts and the Head of Finance role would be substantially amended as part of the review. All three posts would be subject to competitive external recruitment. The report stated that creating these corporate support posts was essential to drive through the necessary savings to secure the financial sustainability of the Council. The post of Head of Customer and Transformation would be that of the current Head of Customer Care, Zoe Hanim, and the post of Head of Law and Governance would be substantially that of the current Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chris Brooks, the Council's Monitoring Officer, but without responsibility for Human Resources.

A review and restructuring of the Council's Finance section was underway which would see the inclusion of a Chief Accountant. Detailed proposals on the restructuring of the Finance Section would be submitted to a future meeting as would proposals for other functions such as management of IT systems and performance data.

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The report stated that consultation had taken place with the trade unions and a consultation document had been sent to all staff in Corporate Support Services and a meeting had been held which all staff had attended.

The report also explained that there were currently four Heads of Service covering all the services provided by the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhoods. The departure of the Head of Transportation and Streetcare (HoTS) earlier in 2017 had presented an opportunity to reshape the senior management tier to provide the necessary capacity and focus whilst minimising any destabilising effects of any structural change. It had been proposed to delete the post of HoTS and to create two new Head of Service posts: Head of Environment and Commercial Services and Head of Transportation and Infrastructure. The other three Head of Service posts would be retained, but there would be some limited changes in reporting lines across the Directorate. Finally, the report stated that a two week staff consultation on the proposals would commence soon and the two posts would be advertised externally.

Resolved -

- (1) That the new post of Director of Resources be created, to have the range of responsibilities as set out in Appendix A, attached to the report, and be the Council's Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, in place of the Strategic Director of Finance;
- (2) That the following new posts be established:
  - (a) Head of Human Resources;
  - (b) Head of Procurement and Contracts;
- (3) That the post of Strategic Director of Finance be deleted and the current arrangement with Peter Lewis to cover the post on an interim contract be ended when an appointment had been made to the new post of Director of Resources and the successful appointee had taken up the post;
- (4) That the Head of Finance post be substantially re-scoped as part of the review, to include the creation of a Chief Accountant post, and as a consequence of this, the current Head of Finance's contract of employment be terminated on redundancy grounds from a date yet to be finalised, but likely to be 30 April 2018;
- (5) That the appointments to the new posts of Director of Resources and Heads of Finance, Human Resources and Procurement and Contracts be made by competitive recruitment by this Committee during the Municipal Year 2017/18;
- (6) That the current posts of Head of Customer Care and Head of Legal and Democratic Services be re-named Head of Customer Care and Transformation and Head of Law and Governance respectively, and that their current post holders, Zoe Hanim and Chris Brooks, be confirmed in the newly titled posts, with Chris Brooks as the Head of

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Law and Governance, continuing to serve as the Council's Monitoring Officer;

- (7) That the Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary action to undertake and implement the review of Finance and Corporate Support Services and to implement the new management structure below Head of Service level;
- (8) That, subject to any material issues arising from the proposed consultation in the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, the senior management capacity in that Directorate be increased by the deletion of the post of Head of Transport and Streetcare and the creation of a Head of Environment and Commercial Services and a Head of Transportation and Infrastructure, as described in the report.

### 8. 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.

### 9. 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 a request for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy.

The proposal, 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.

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Peter Sloman, Chief Executive, assured the Committee that a rigorous assessment of the case for redundancy of employee A had been carried out, in accordance with the Council's HR policies and procedures, prior to the terms of the redundancy being brought to the Committee for approval. He was confident that the approach being recommended was appropriate in the circumstances of the case and that the proposal would be robust in relation to any audit of the decision-making process that had been followed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the dismissal of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employee A 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.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1).

(The meeting commenced at 6.17 pm and closed at 6.43 pm).