

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 8 NOVEMBER 2018

employees 11 years to reach the top of the grade, rather than eight years as now, which could potentially create equal pay implications. The alternative was for a new grading structure to be designed to accommodate the new scale points. However, this would be more complex to achieve and was not recommended at the current time.

The report recommended the introduction of the new pay spine using option 2 (to consider awarding the increment first and then assimilate the employees to the new pay spine) and to introduce the new pay spine without the new scps. This option was £100k less than the budget provision and was set out in a table in the report.

It would be imperative that appraisals were completed by the due date of end of February 2019 as this was the mechanism for determining if an increment was due so that an employee could then be transferred to the new pay spine and would receive the 'cost of living' pay award.

AGREED - That the submission of the report to Personnel Committee, on 8 November 2018, for agreement, be noted.

3. SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEMES

The Head of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report that proposed the implementation of three new salary sacrifice schemes, for a workplace nursery, Additional Voluntary Contributions and lease cars, which would allow employees to save on tax and National Insurance. A revised copy of the Pay Policy Statement was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Workplace Nursery - The provider had estimated that 90% of Kennet Day Nursery users who were employees of the Council would use the salary sacrifice scheme. The management fee for the Council would be 2% of the annual childcare fee paid by all users of the nursery, the fee would be paid for two years, the cost of which would be taken from the Employer's National Insurance contributions savings which would be made by the Council. At the end of two years, the Council would retain all savings that had been made. As an indicative figure, this meant that the fee would be around £19k for two years and the saving to the Council would be around £130k for two years based on current usage, from which the management fee would be taken.

Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) - Paying AVCs through salary sacrifice would allow employees to add more money to their pensions by not paying National Insurance contributions on the amount sacrificed and the savings of tax and National Insurance would be used to make additional contributions to an employee's individual pension pot. The provider expected an average take up rate of 5% of existing LGPS members. The management fee would be 4% per year for three years, the cost of which would be taken from the Employer's National Insurance savings made by the Council. At the end of the three years the Council would retain all the National Insurance savings. As an indicative figure this meant that the total management fee for three years would be around £45k, with the savings to the Council being around £189k for three years from which the management fee would be taken. The Council's Statement of Policy about Exercise of Discretionary Functions under the Local Government Pension Scheme would need to be amended

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to allow it to pay a contribution where an employee had elected to pay an AVC by salary sacrifice.

Lease Cars - Under this scheme the employer would lease the car from the provider and the employee would enter into a three year agreement to lease the car from the Council. The monthly cost would depend on the value of the car. Cars would be available for the employee without the need to provide a deposit and no credit check would be made. However, employees would be provided with a full breakdown of the monthly cost by the provider so that they could check affordability. In addition, salary could not be sacrificed to a level below the national minimum wage. The provider had estimated that around 2% of employees would use the scheme. The saving on National Insurance contributions would depend on the employee's choice of car, but an 'average' car could result in £688.29 National Insurance saving each year or £51,622 per annum, if 2% of employees used the scheme.

AGREED - That the submissions of the report to Personnel Committee, on 8 November 2018, for agreement, be noted.

4. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Head of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report that presented a review of the Council's employment policy framework which aimed to ensure that all employment policies were clear, easy to understand, up to date and reviewed regularly. The following appendices were attached to the report:

Appendix A	List of all existing employment policies;
Appendix B	Proposed Disciplinary Policy;
Appendix C	Proposed Grievance Policy;
Appendix D	Proposed Managing Sickness Absence Policy;
Appendix E	Proposed Managing Poor Performance Policy;
Appendix F	Proposed Bullying and Harassment Policy;
Appendix G	Proposed Flexible Working Policy;
Appendix H	Proposed Social Media Policy;
Appendix I	Equality Impact Assessment.

The report explained the all employment policies would be reviewed by HR before then end of March 2019 and submitted to the Committee for approval, following consultation and negotiation with the trade unions. The policies contained in the report had been prioritised because they did not reflect current employment legislation and hence had put the Council at risk. The policies had been re-written with four principles in mind and broadly reflected the template policies that were available on the Unison website, where available. In future all employment policies would be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation required it.

For each of the existing policies which needed to be revised the issues that needed to be addressed, and additional key changes that were being proposed, were set out in a timetable that had been included in the report. In all cases, any issues that had been highlighted had been addressed in the revised policy. The process for agreeing the policies with trade unions was set out in the report, with the policies having been sent by email to the trade union representatives, with a covering report

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explaining the key changes and timescales for reaching agreement, in August 2018. However, trade unions representatives had been unable to agree the policies with their members within the timetable and at a meeting in October 2018 individual views of the full-time trade union officials from Unite, Unison and NEU were discussed and the policies were amended to take account of their views. A communication plan was also being drawn up to communicate the revised policies, once agreed, to managers and employees.

S Smith reported that there would be training for all managers on the new employment policies once they had been approved, following final consultation with the trade unions.

AGREED - That the submission of the report to Personnel Committee, on 8 November 2018, for approval, subject to one final consultation meeting with the trade unions, be noted.

6. MATTERS RAISED BY THE UNIONS

(a) Bennet Road Refurbishment

G Framalitto, Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, reported that phase 2C of the work at Bennet Road had been completed, following extensive work to the buildings to make more efficient use of them at a cost of £5m. The aim was to optimise the site at 19 Bennet Road and to eventually dispose of the site at Darwin Close. The buildings were very old and had lots of issues, their energy efficiency was limited, there was no 'do nothing' option, and costs for the buildings were in the region of £1.5m. There would be long term benefits from improving the building, such as savings resulting from the improved energy efficiency, and there would be a significant capital receipt from the disposal of the Darwin Close site.

The renovated space at Bennet Road would be similar to that at the Civic offices in that there would be Wi-Fi and touch-down spaces and hot-desking would be in place. There would also be substantial changes in the way staff at this site worked with more use of hand-held devices so that there would be no need for them to be in the offices.

Future opportunities included the Council using the land owned at 16 to 19 Bennet Road, which was currently leased to a car company.

With regard to space for vehicles at the site, and particularly commercial vehicles, the Council's needs would continue to be reviewed to make sure there was adequate space.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(The meeting opened at 5.00pm and closed at 5.49pm).