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## **Employment Panel**

**Report of the meeting held on 28th November 2012**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **14. EMPLOYMENT REPORT**

The Panel received a quarterly report on the Human Resource matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. On this occasion, the report included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- ◆ employee numbers;
- ◆ salary costs;
- ◆ employee turnover;
- ◆ retention of new starters;
- ◆ sickness absence reporting; and
- ◆ the Human Resources caseload.

In terms of tackling sickness absence, the Panel has noted that a consistent use of return to work interviews and self certification for all periods of absence will be introduced with effect from 1st January 2013. For this purpose, the HR Business Manager has attended all Management Teams during November to explain the new arrangements. The outcome of a review of the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedures will be presented to the Panel's next meeting in February.

Members have also commented on the increase in stress related absences, particularly those which are as a result of personal issues. Members have noted that these were addressed in a manner which is compliant with employment law and that it was hoped that the introduction of return to work interviews might make a positive difference in this area. The District Council also has a stress management assessment kit which is designed to help employees and their managers to develop an action plan to address stress related issues.

#### **15. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HR, PAYROLL AND ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

The Panel has considered the performance of LGSS Human Resources, Payroll and Organisational Workforce Development services across the key service measures put in place at the start of the contract. LGSS performance will be measured in three areas namely:

- ◆ HR Strategic and Advisory;
- ◆ Recruitment and Payroll; and
- ◆ Organisational Workforce Development.

It is the intention to agree specific performance targets after the first full year of operation.

Having noted that performance standards have been achieved to-date and the priorities identified for the next quarter, the Panel was pleased to note that, overall, the transition to LGSS had largely been a success and has provided benefits that had not been foreseen in terms of access to wider projects and expertise within their organisation. LGSS has also been able to contribute positively to the pay review which had not originally been the expectation. Further reports will be provided on a quarterly basis.

## **16. REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION INFORMATION ARRANGEMENTS**

At present, the Council has two inter-related forums for consulting and informing staff on employment and service matters; and for making employment related decisions. The role of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group is to forge closer, more effective working relations between management and employees and the Employment Panel is responsible for discharging the functions of the Council in relation to the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council has established a Senior Officer Panel which is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of Chief Officers and to undertake hearings or take disciplinary action at this level.

Following a review of the arrangements for consulting and informing staff on employment and service matters; and for making employment related decisions the Panel has indicated its support for a number of proposals to streamline these arrangements. Details of these arrangements are reflected in the Appendix hereto. It is anticipated that the new arrangements will enable the Council to:-

- ◆ reflect best practice in governance arrangements and in setting Senior Management salaries;
- ◆ avoid the unnecessary duplication of business between Forums;
- ◆ clarify the responsibilities of Managers and clearly establish how they are to be held accountable; and
- ◆ enhance the role of the Staff Council.

These proposals also have suggested that employment related decisions be delegated, at some stage, to the Head of Paid Service which will enable these decisions to be consulted on and ratified locally and more expediently. A decision whether to vary the Council's Scheme of Delegation in this way will be considered by the Corporate Governance Panel and reported elsewhere on the agenda.

The Panel has been assured that the recommendation to establish an Employment Scrutiny Panel will not diminish the role of Members but will offer an opportunity to scrutinise the way in which decisions are

reached and enable policy matters to be considered in more detail. The terms and conditions of Senior Officers will continue to be the responsibility of the Senior Officers Panel whose terms of reference will be extended to enable the Panel to consider the salary to be applied to posts at Head of Service level and above.

As these proposals will vary the Council's constitutional arrangements, they will need to be considered by the Corporate Governance Panel which will recommend to Council accordingly.

## **17. SAFEGUARDING**

In order to comply with recent changes in legislation, the Panel has endorsed the content of a new policy and procedures for safeguarding vulnerable people, including children from abuse. The policy will apply to all District Council employees and is intended to promote the safety of those using Council services whilst at the same time protecting employees and Councillors from false allegations.

As further changes will be required shortly and on a regular basis, the Panel has authorised the Chief Officers Management Team and the Lead Safeguarding Officer to make the necessary adjustments to the Policy until it is next reviewed in June 2014.

Having received an explanation of the arrangements for implementing and monitoring compliance with the new Policy, the Panel has recommended that an implementation timetable and monitoring system should be developed to indicate the progress which has been made.

## **18. RETIREMENT OF EMPLOYEES – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for, the excellent contributions made by the following employees during their employment in the local government service and conveyed its best wishes to them for a long and happy retirement.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Local Government Service:</b>
Mr D Bacon	Environmental Management	15 years
Mr D Hartley	One Leisure, St Ives	17 years
Mr R Philcox	Operations Division	6 years
Mr G Shipley	Environmental Management	24 years
Mr M Smith	Operations Division	7 years

**19. PAY REVIEW PROJECT**

*(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.)*

The Panel has received an update on the progress being made on the Council's Pay Review project. Members were informed that Phase 2 of the Job Evaluation work stream had now begun and 57 posts (which equated to 208 staff) within the organisation had been evaluated. Phase 3 was expected to commence in December and to be completed by the end of March 2013. An Equality Impact Assessment had now been undertaken on amendments to the Job Evaluation Framework Guidance and a number of recommendations have been endorsed by the Pay Review Project Board.

As part of the Job Evaluation process, work is also being undertaken to establish 'Job Families' for business support staff. A number of staff focus groups have been arranged for this purpose and it was anticipated that the criteria would be approved by the Pay Review Project Board and the Employment Panel in February.

The outcome of phase 2 of the Job Evaluation work stream will enable work to start on the modelling of a new District Council pay structure early in the New Year, for implementation in October 2013.

S Cawley  
Chairman