

Personnel Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th December 2017 at 10.00am in the Conference Room, Ground Floor at County Hall

Present:

Mr C Jordan
Mr G Nobbs
Mr A Proctor
Dr M Strong
Mrs A Thomas

Also Present:

Ms K Haywood	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Ms F McDiarmid	Strategy Director, Managing Director's Department
Mrs S Shirtcliff	Head of Human Resources
Dr W Thomson	Managing Director

1. Apologies

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. Election of Chairman

Mr C Jordan was nominated and duly seconded as Chairman. Dr M Strong was also nominated however, in the absence of a seconder, Mr Jordan was duly elected Chairman.

Mr C Jordan in the Chair.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27th February 2017

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Election of Vice Chairman

Mrs A Thomas was nominated, seconded and duly elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

5. Declarations of Interests

- 5.1 There were no interests to declare.

6. Pay Policy Statement 2018-19

- 6.1 The annexed report (6) by the Head of Human Resources was received. The

report provided a draft Statement for 2018/19, for comment and recommendation to full Council for approval.

6.2 The Committee noted that Government proposals to introduce new regulations on public sector pay had been expected to take effect in 2016 however they had yet to be implemented and the final form of the regulations were still unknown. In response to a queried raised, the Head of HR said that there was still no indication as to when the regulations would take effect. As soon as this was known a revised pay policy statement would be brought back to the Committee in order that the Council could revise any related policies.

6.3 It was noted that once proposals were in place the Council would need to ensure that governance arrangements were in place to monitor public sector employees who had received severance payments and then returned to work in the same part of the public sector within 12 months.

6.4 The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To recommend the Statement to full Council for approval.

7. Gender Pay Gap Reporting

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Head of Human Resources was received outlining data for the new statutory gender pay gap reporting regime which the County Council was required to publish online by 31 March 2018.

7.2 In response to a query as to whether the Council was recruiting sufficient women to positions at grades M and N it was noted that more women than men were employed at these grades however, there were proportionally more men employed at the higher grade. The number of women employed at this level had however increased from 41% to 51% from 2014 to 2015 and detailed analysis had shown that the pay gap was as a result of the length of service, as new posts were generally recruited to at the bottom of their grade.

7.3 The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that the 'best' person was recruited for jobs within the Council. It was however important to have policies in place to assist in ensuring that women, and also minority groups, were supported in assisting them to progress in the workplace either through flexible working policies or addressing training needs.

7.4 The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To authorise the Head of HR to publish the gender pay gap reporting outcomes for 2017/18 before the statutory deadline.

8. Grade of Locality Library and Information Assistant

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Head of Human Resources, setting out changes to the Locality Library and Information Assistant role, and a grading recommendation, was received.

8.2 The Head of HR informed the Committee that the regrading of the Locality Library and Information Assistant role had been brought to the Committee as it involved a significant number of posts and the changes would give rise to

significant cost implications. The proposed changes did not relate to a change in working hours, just job related responsibilities. It was noted that the number of Library Managers had been reduced from 23.48 to 18.81fte and the Head of HR clarified that in light of the small number of posts affected this decision did not need to be brought to Personnel Committee however, this had been considered as part of the Council's budget decisions.

8.3 In response to an issue raised regarding the delivery of the agreed £622,000 budget saving for the Library and Information Service in 2018/19 it was confirmed that this was a net saving.

8.4 The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To approve the regrading of the Locality Library and Information Assistant role from Scale C to D.

9. Enhanced employment offer for 'hard to recruit' posts

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Head of Human Resources was received. The report set out the issues associated with attracting employees to "hard to recruit" posts which could lead to additional costs and a less stable workforce through the reliance on agency workers.

9.2 The Committee noted that the majority of 'hard to recruit' posts were predominantly for social worker posts within Children's Services and although the Council was attracting newly qualified social workers, particularly new graduates from UEA, there were still difficulties in recruiting experienced employees to these roles.

9.3 The Committee noted that the Council was spending significant amounts on agency workers and the proposal in the report was one way to try and reduce costs. It was expected that any initial cost would be offset by any reduced expenditure on agency staff. It was agreed that Officers would monitor where the initiatives were being implemented and that a report be brought back to a future meeting on how the scheme was progressing and any financial implications.

9.4 In response to a query as to whether there was a limit on the length of time after appointment that an employee could claim the relocation expenses set out in Appendix 1 of the report, the Head of HR agreed to check and respond to the Committee following the meeting.

9.5 The Committee noted that the proposals outlined in the report applied to all levels of staff in the organisation however, the County Council would only implement them if appropriate, for instance if there was a need to advertise for a hard to fill post nationally.

9.6 The Committee noted that new legislation had been introduced in April 2017 introducing changes to the way that intermediaries' legislation was applied to off-payroll working in the public sector. In instances where self-employed individuals were providing services for the County Council under an off payroll arrangement, a HMRC off payroll determination was carried out to determine whether it fell in or out of scope of the new regulations. Individuals who were in scope would be paid via NCC's payroll and income tax and national insurance contributions

would be deducted at source.

9.7 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- 1.1 Approve the extension of continuous service, for the purposes of rights to sickness, leave and notice periods, to Agency Workers moving to permanent employment with the Council in hard to recruit posts.
 - 1.2 Note the other proposed actions to support the "Agency to permanent employment" initiative in Table 1.
 - 1.3 Approve amendments to the Relocation policy:
 - 1.3.1 to clarify that the policy applies to those moving from and to rental accommodation; as well as to home owners
 - 1.3.2 to amend the interest-free loan maximum amount from £5,000 to £10,000 in line with new HMRC tax limits
 - 1.3.3 to widen the scope of costs for which interest free loans can be used within the scheme.
 - 1.4 Approve a new 'refer a friend' provision as part of the Market Supplements policy, whereby existing employees will be paid a £500 incentive if they refer someone who is then permanently appointed to a hard to fill post, each case to be approved by the Head of HR.
 - 1.5 Delegate authority to the Head of HR to apply the enhanced employment offer as appropriate for hard to recruit posts.
2. The Committee also agreed to monitor where these initiatives were implemented and that a report would be brought back to a future meeting on how the scheme was progressing and any financial implications.

10. Exclusion of the Public

Officers presented the public interest test for the following report, as required by the 2006 Access to Information Regulations, for the consideration of the Committee as follows:

The report set out sensitive information relating to the terms of employment of County Council employees. The release of this information would prejudice possible forthcoming negotiations and would therefore not be in the public interest. This assessment has been reached in light of the guidance provided by the Head of Law.

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

That the public be excluded while the following report was considered.

SUMMARY OF MINUTES EXCLUDED FROM PUBLIC DEPOSIT

11. Employment Costs 2018-19

The exempt report by the Strategy Director, was received.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- 1) To approve the opening of discussions with unions on options around employment costs
- 2) To note the further work that departments were undertaking to maximise the cost effectiveness of employment expenditure.

The meeting concluded at 11.10am

CHAIRMAN