

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Councillors: Paul Bryant, Adrian Edwards, Quentin Webb, Keith Lock, Andrew Rowles

Also present: Jane Milone (Human Resources Manager), Robert O'Reilly (Head of HR), Linda Pye (Policy Officer)

PART I

49. APOLOGIES.

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Tony Linden. Councillor Andrew Rowles substituted for Councillor Linden.

50. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd and 8th May 2008 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest received.

52. MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROCEDURE.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) seeking approval for a revised procedure for the application of market supplement payments to particular posts within the Council. Robert O'Reilly stated that HR had written a procedure in order to provide a clear process for determining the need for and level of any market supplement. This would enable managers to have the flexibility to apply market supplements in order to recruit and retain an appropriately skilled workforce. The procedure also set out a process for the review of current payments every two years which would be backed up by market research to ascertain whether the payment was still appropriate.

Jane Milone stated that the new form to be used to apply for a Market Supplement was lengthy but felt that it would provide a proper audit trail to ensure that a more consistent and fair approach was applied across the board. All applications would need to be consulted on by the Group Accountant and signed off by the Chief Executive/Leader of the Council.

Members queried whether staff employed from agencies, such as Ranstad, would require a percentage of any Market Supplement. Robert O'Reilly confirmed that he would e-mail the agencies to make it clear that a percentage of any Market Supplement would not be paid to the agency.

Members were also of the opinion that any market research should look at other local authorities in the vicinity but also private companies. The private companies might be able to pay a higher salary than the local authority but the package as a whole might not compare favourably to the local authority. For example, the private company pension might not be as good as a local authority pension. Jane Milone responded that ICT staff might need to be compared to the private sector whereas Planning posts were more likely to be compared with similar posts in other local authorities. Members had thought that there were Government guidelines on pay so

that posts of a particular level were the same across all local authorities. Robert responded that there were no set pay grades for any particular jobs and that the levels were set locally via job evaluation or other such processes. Market Supplements were used in order to retain existing staff and to attract new members of staff.

Councillor Keith Lock felt that the relevant Executive Member should also sign off any application for a Market Supplement. However, Robert stated that Portfolio Holders would be consulted but should not sign off as that would require an amendment to the Constitution.

In response to a query in respect of the number of staff currently receiving Market Supplements, Jane confirmed that it was in the region of 30 members of staff.

RESOLVED that the revised Market Supplement Procedure (as set out in the Appendix to the report) to apply to the review of all current market supplements and the introduction of any proposed new market supplements be approved.

53. RE-EMPLOYMENT POLICY.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) seeking approval for a new policy which set out the circumstances in which the Council would re-employ ex-employees whose employment was terminated (a) with a redundancy or severance payment (and if over 50 premature retirement benefits) incurring a cost to the Council; or (b) due to misconduct (short of gross misconduct) or underperformance due to ill health or capability.

Robert O'Reilly asked the Committee to approve the Re-Employment Policy and to decide whether the period of time in which ex-employees covered by the policy should not be re-employed or engaged on a contract for services should be two or three years. Jane Milone stated that a section had also been added in in respect of misconduct and although that was not necessarily an issue within this authority it needed to be included within the Policy in order to bring clarity and allow some flexibility. Jane reiterated that this Policy covered those staff who had left the authority with an additional cost to the Council and would not therefore cover staff who had retired at no cost to the Council.

Councillor Adrian Edwards queried whether this Policy would cover teaching staff – would they be able to be employed at another school if they had been dismissed or resigned from a particular school. Jane responded that serious offences would be covered by a National framework and any minor offences would have to be picked up from references. However, it was felt that schools should be excluded from this policy.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Re-employment Policy be approved subject to the exclusion of teaching staff from the policy;
- (2) the period of time in which ex-employees covered by the policy may not normally be employed, or engaged on a contract for services, should be two years.

54. RETIREMENT PROCEDURE – FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 6) seeking approval for amendments to the Council's Age Retirement Procedure to include provision for dealing with requests for flexible retirement. The Local Government Pension Scheme had introduced the potential for members of staff to retire flexibly. It

allowed employees in the scheme, aged 50 or over, to continue working on reduced hours or in a post with a lower salary whilst drawing some or all of their accrued pension benefits. It was therefore proposed to amend the existing Age Retirement Procedure (to be renamed the “Retirement Procedure”) to cover the flexible retirement options available for employees who were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Some of those options would have a cost to the Council and others would not.

Robert O’Reilly clarified the 85 year rule for Members.

RESOLVED that the Retirement Procedure and associated documentation be approved.

(The meeting commenced at 2.30pm and closed at 3.20pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature: