

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2019

Councillors Present: Pamela Bale (Chairman), Richard Crumly (Vice-Chairman) and Mollie Lock (Substitute) (In place of Jeff Brooks)

Also Present: Robert O'Reilly (Head of Human Resources), Rebecca Bird (HR Officer) and Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Dennis Benneyworth, Councillor Jeff Brooks and Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge

PART I

7. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to item 6, Implementing the 2019 Pay Award, Councillor Mollie Lock noted that the Personnel Committee had agreed to Option B and that she had raised at the time her concerns about the impact that could have on schools' budgets. Robert O' Reilly accepted that as this was a national pay award it would be applied to all support staff in schools. Although he acknowledged that it could have an impact schools were, however, responsible for managing their own budgets. They were aware that this was going to happen as it was the second phase of a two year deal.

8. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

9. Statutory Pay Policy 2019 (C3617)

Robert O'Reilly presented a report which sought Council's approval of the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication from 1st April 2019 in accordance with s38 of the Localism Act 2011. As part of the process the Personnel Committee were invited to comment on the report prior to Council approval.

The statement should set out the policies in relation to:

- Remuneration of its chief officers;
- The remuneration of its lowest paid employees (and the definition and reasons for defining it);
- The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and those who were not chief officers.

It was noted that the Pay Policy Statement for 2019 had been updated to reflect the new National Joint Council pay scales which would be implemented on 1st April 2019. The ratio between the highest and lowest paid employee would be 8.52 to 1 which was well within the maximum ratio of 20 to 1 which was set out in the Hutton Review of Fair Pay. In response to a query the Head of HR stated that it was unlikely that anyone in a local authority would exceed the maximum recommended ratio.

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Councillor Richard Crumly queried if the threshold for taking redundancy payments to the Executive (£10k) was too high. Robert O' Reilly stated while this could be revisited it was the Executive that had set the threshold so it was unlikely that they would want to see it reduced. Following a discussion the Committee agreed that the threshold should remain at £10k.

Councillor Crumly queried whether it was appropriate for Heads of Service to be able to approve severance costs associated with sickness absence. Robert O' Reilly stated that when this was previously discussed it was agreed that the Council should adopt as humane an approach as possible in this area. Councillor Crumly queried what level of payments could be made. Officers explained that this depended on a number of factors including salary level and length of service. Councillor Crumly asked if the Council made use of section 203 agreements. Robert O' Reilly stated that the Council made use of proper settlement agreements in order to protect itself which included confidentiality clauses where appropriate.

Councillor Crumly noted that paragraph 3.8.3 stated that employees who left the Council with a redundancy or other severance payment 'will not normally be re-engaged by the council within two years of the termination date'. He questioned the need for including the word normally as he did not believe the Council should reemploy them within that time frame. He asked for a list of the number of times this had happened in the last two years. The Head of HR stated that he could not recall any instances when this had happened in the last two years. He provided examples of when it might be appropriate to re-engage staff and the Committee accepted the explanation and the reasons for the wording. Robert O' Reilly noted that at the time the policy had been adopted a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken and the Council had adopted one of the strictest approaches. Most authorities included a one year period with some authorities setting it as low as six months.

Councillor Crumly noted that the decision to re-engage employees within the two year period involved a number of Officers and Members and he believed that only Members should be involved in the decision. Officers stated that this was a transparent process and ultimately the decision to employ anyone rested with the Head of HR so it would not be appropriate for Members only to make this decision. The process did however allow for Member involvement in that the Leaders of the Administration and Opposition were involved. The Committee accepted the process.

Councillor Crumly noted that the issue of linked grades had been raised at a previous meeting and he wondered if this had been resolved. Officers explained that this had been looked at but as there would be cost implications for the Council the then Portfolio Holder for Human Resources had decided that for that reason they should remain unchanged. Councillor Mollie Lock noted that she was the one that had raised it and she accepted the explanation. She had also been informed that managers had some discretion as to which spinal column point (SCP) they appointed at and that the issue of 'overlap' could be resolved in that way.

Councillor Crumly asked if it was necessary to include the paragraph about employees receiving payment for working in particularly dirty or unpleasant circumstances. Councillor Pamela Bale noted that this would not apply to officers if it formed part of their normal working conditions as this would be reflected in their grade. She could think of potential circumstances such as the 2007 floods when this would be relevant and she would therefore like to see it remain. Councillor Lock supported the retention of this paragraph.

RESOLVED that the report would be recommended to Full Council at its meeting on 5th March 2019

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(The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 2.29 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature