



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 23 April 2013 at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors Roger Glithero JP (Chairman)
Jeremy Taylor (Vice-Chairman)
Glenn Harwood MBE

Sharn Matthews Executive Director
Katy Everitt Head of Resources and Organisational
Development
Aime Armstrong Human Resources Manager
James McLaughlin Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Wendy Brackenbury and Steven North. The apology for absence from David Oliver (Chief Executive) was also noted.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4.0 QUESTIONS

4.1 There were no questions submitted under procedure rule 10.3.

5.0 WORKFORCE STATISTICS

5.1 The Sub-Committee reviewed data about staff sickness, turnover and the number of staff employed.

6.0 VACANT POSTS UPDATE

6.1 The Sub-Committee received a report on:-

- (a) Vacant posts
- (b) New posts created on the establishment
- (c) Posts temporarily vacant
- (d) Budget savings, and
- (e) Empty posts/hours still on establishment but with no budget.

7.0 Xchange MINUTES

7.1 The Sub-Committee received and noted the last set of approved minutes of the Xchange group for the meeting held on 13 November 2012.

7.2 Members requested that it would be beneficial to receive draft minutes from the group in future so as to be aware of current issues.

8.0 COUNCIL CAR SCHEME REVIEW FINAL UPDATE

8.1 The Sub-Committee received a report providing an update on the final stages of the Council's car scheme review. Staff who had a car under the scheme had been given a number of options regarding the extension of their lease, purchasing the vehicle or returning the vehicle and being suitably compensated to enable the scheme to be closed completely in October 2015.

8.2 Members once again stated their thanks to those officers who had undertaken and co-operated with the review.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

9.0 EQUAL PAY AUDIT

9.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report and Equal Pay Audit submitted by the Human Resources Manager. It was noted that best practice was to carry out an Audit every three years to ensure equality in pay and that no discrimination or bias, intentional or otherwise, had occurred in decisions about staff pay. The Audit had followed the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance on undertaking such audits.

9.2 The evidence indicated that the Council was complying with equalities legislation and its own policies in the area, although the Audit had recommended the following three items of action:

- i) Determine the reasons for the lack of staff with a disability in Planning Services.
- ii) Monitor the gender balance of requests and new appointments made above the bottom of the grade.
- iii) Undertake a further Equal Pay Audit by the end of March 2016

RESOLVED:

That the report and Equal Pay Audit be noted.

10.0 COST OF LIVING PAY RISE

10.1 The Executive Director presented a report from Chief Executive concerning the implementation of the 2013 cost of living pay award for staff

10.2 The report proposed that a 1% cost of living pay rise for 2013 be agreed, backdated to 1 April 2013, subject to the Council abiding by any other changes to Green Book terms and conditions that are agreed as part of any national pay deal. The Council followed national pay negotiations in respect of all staff it employed and it was noted that the last national cost of living pay rise awarded had been made in 2010 for those staff earning below £21,000 per year, with the last pay award for all staff being a 1% rise in 2009. It was also noted that since 2009, a number of staff benefits provided by the Council had been removed or reduced.

10.3 It was thought likely, as in previous years, that national pay negotiations would continue for some time, thus delaying the payment of any cost of living pay award. The Council had incorporated provision of £61,000 into the 2013/14 budget representing a 1% pay rise for all staff. Whilst the Council remained part of national negotiations, a 1% pay award could be made with effect from 1 April 2013 and in advance of the conclusion of any national pay agreement, subject to the Council abiding by any other terms agreed nationally at a later date.

10.4 There would be benefits to the Council arising from making a pay award in advance of the national award, primarily in recognising the contributions being made by staff over the past few years. It was also important that the authority could attract good candidates for posts as it was noted that some difficulties in recruitment had recently been experienced.

RESOLVED:

That a 1% cost of living pay rise for 2013, backdated to 1 April 2013, be approved, subject to the Council abiding by any other changes to Green Book terms and conditions that are agreed as part of any national pay deal.

11.0 RETURNING OFFICER FEES AND EXPENSES

11.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report concerning the remuneration of the Returning Officer for carrying out various statutory responsibilities in relation to election procedures. A report on this had last been considered by a Committee of the Council in 1992.

11.2 The current Returning Officer's responsibilities for various types of elections and the payment structure were outlined, together with options for determining future fees.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the current schedule of fees be approved in accordance with statute and the Authority's pay policy and that, for the time being, fees be increased in line with cost of living pay rises made to the Chief Executive.

(Reason: to ensure ENC fees are appropriately set and openness and transparency in decision-making.)

RESOLVED:

That discussions be pursued with other local authorities in Northamptonshire with a view to developing a consistent approach to the setting of Returning Officer fees on a county-wide basis.

12.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

- 12.1 That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

13.0 DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES – PROPOSALS FOR REVISED STRUCTURE AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 13.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report seeking approval to restructure Democratic and Electoral Services, which set out the proposed structure, the reasons behind the proposals and the detail of consultation responses received from affected staff.
- 13.2 Members considered the detail of the responses provided by affected staff and were provided with detail in respect of the robustness of the proposals.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the revised structure of Democratic and Electoral Services be implemented with effect from 1 June 2013;
- ii) That the creation and process for the filling of the new posts within the new structure be approved.

14.0 STAFF PROPOSAL 22 – EMPLOYMENT OF THE HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

- 14.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report regarding the employment position of the Head of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit It was noted that considerable further work would be required to ensure that all risks and implications were clearly understood and that this council would not be in a worse financial

position as a consequence of any changes. Members asked that any associated legal agreements to protect the council's financial position be brought before Councillors before signature.

RESOLVED:

- i) That further work be undertaken to investigate the practicalities and evaluate the risks that would be associated with this Council taking on the employment of the Head of the Joint Planning Unit.
- ii) That a further report be brought before this Sub-Committee prior to a final decision being taken as to whether to proceed with this arrangement.

(Reason: to provide a better employment arrangement for the Head of the JPU while ensuring that the Council is not exposed to any increased financial or non-financial risks as a result)

15.0 STAFF PROPOSAL 23 – COUNCILLOR UPDATE RE EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

15.1 A report was submitted providing an update to Members in relation to an employment tribunal application made against the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Chairman