

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
5 JULY 2017
7.30 - 8.55 PM**



Present:

Councillors McLean (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Mrs Birch, Ms Miller, Mrs Temperton, Virgo and Worrall

Apologies for Absence were received from:

Councillors Leake

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 February 2017 and 24 May 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee

Councillor Allen reported that the Local Joint Committee had a discussion around the proposed changes to redundancy authorisation. Trade unions had expressed that they were keen to ensure they continued to be kept informed as they were currently and further that Members should also be keep abreast of all information relating to redundancies in the same way that they were.

Trade unions were content that they had been briefed on all the other redundancies that were on the agenda.

8. Minutes of Sub Groups

The Committee noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 15 February 2017.

9. Redundancy Authorisation - Proposed Changes

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that the Council's Constitution did not require the Employment Committee to approve all redundancies but that it had become custom and practice over the years for the Committee to approve redundancies. This had become problematic given the Transformation Programme that the Council was currently undergoing. The scale and pace of change was

significant and bringing decision making on redundancies to the Committee was slowing the pace of change and increasing cost and uncertainty for staff. If redundancies weren't approved by the Committee, cumulative savings would be significant. Chief officer redundancies and any redundancies senior to this would continue to be approved by the Committee in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference.

The Committee expressed concern around these proposals. There was concern that Members would no longer be able to influence or oversee these decisions and that there should be Member input from the Employment Committee. If decisions were needed urgently, these should be taken in consultation with the Chairman and emails sent to the rest of the Committee, or extra meetings of the Committee be convened. The Committee noted that whilst the majority of redundancies were agreeable, there were exceptions and it was important that Members continued to have oversight.

The Chairman reminded Members that the current terms of reference for the Committee did not give the Committee authority to agree these redundancies. If these proposals were agreed primary oversight of these decisions would rest with Executive Members. Employment Committee Members would continue to be kept informed and have the opportunity to ask questions and influence decisions.

The Committee remained concerned that the opportunity to debate would be lost. If these proposals were to be adopted it would be critical to ensure that Employment Committee Members were consulted on redundancies in good time allowing them the opportunity to give an input and influence decisions. The Committee were clear that they did not simply want to be informed that these decisions had been taken.

It was reiterated that trade unions had been clear that in their view Members should continue to be involved in decisions relating to redundancy of staff and that the Local Joint Committee was one of the ways to do this. The Committee felt a responsibility to oversee these staffing issues and currently the approval of redundancies constituted the majority of the work of the Committee.

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that at present by the time redundancy reports were brought to the Committee, quite often the consultation period had ended and all work was complete including selection processes and appeals, bar issuing a dismissal notice. At this point, the redundancy was almost irretrievable in any event. This led to increasing uncertainty for staff for a prolonged period as was evident with the current Council Wide Support Services Review.

The Committee expressed that it was important for Committee Members to be consulted on these decisions at an early stage. This could be at the same time that trade unions were consulted or in tandem with the Corporate Management Team..

The Chairman proposed that he consult with the Leader and the Chief Executive on a model of operation that allowed the Employment Committee to be a consultee at an early part of the process, allowing Members to contribute.

RESOLVED that the Chairman consult with the Leader and the Chief Executive on a model of operation that allowed the Employment Committee to be a consultee on redundancy decisions at an early part of the process, allowing Members to contribute and that proposals be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

10. **Exit and Severance Payments**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that the Committee had received an information item in October 2015 regarding the £95,000 exit payment cap proposed by the Government in May 2015, due to be implemented in 2016. This implementation had not been progressed by the Government and following the General Election on 8 June 2017, further delays had been encountered.

The Committee had received a separate report on reducing the current redundancy multiplier in December 2016, however as regulation of exit payments would impact any decisions on the Council's multiplier it was proposed that the multiplier and severance payments should be considered in tandem.

It was noted that a report would be brought back to the Committee once regulations were published by the government. The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that it was important to consider the positive relations the Council currently had with trade unions and that it may not be the right time to amend redundancy payments, in the middle of such a large scale change. It was noted that the Council was not the highest or lowest payer in terms of local authorities across the Country. In addition, those that had access to a pension scheme, were not incorporated within a multiplier payment.

It was noted that Government regulations were expected in the summer. The Chairman agreed to write to the government minister to get a response of when regulations were likely to be issued.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the information report.

11. Exclusion of the Public And Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

12. Forestcare Contract Termination and Resultant Redundancy

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this report identified the staffing implications arising from the ending of the 'Housing Solutions' contract. The Committee queried that if the end date of this contract was known, why wasn't this redundancy brought to the Committee sooner. It was advised that this query would need to be addressed to the Chief Officer: Housing.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted that the post-holder, identified in the exempt Appendix A, redundant with effect from 6 July 2017 in accordance with the terms set out in exempt Appendix A.

13. Restructure of Council Wide Support Services - Employment Implications

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this review had 196 staff in scope, this equated to 176 full time equivalent staff. The review would put in place a model that delivered a number of benefits. The model was scalable, would improve resilience and ensure a consistent support service.

A total of 17 staff would be made redundant, 11 of these redundancies were voluntary. Redeployment opportunities would be sought for all staff affected. One redeployment opportunity had already been identified.

In response to Members queries, the Chief Officer reported that there would not be an additional cost for the upgrade of the Agresso system. The upgrade would allow significantly more self service around budget monitoring.

RESOLVED that;

- i) the new structures for Council Wide Support Services identified in Appendix A of the report attached to the agenda papers, be noted with implementation commencing from 1 September 2017.
- ii) the post holders listed in Appendix B of the agenda papers, be declared redundant (in accordance with Council policy with the costs being met from the Structural Changes Fund and subject to any redeployment opportunities offered to those affected).

14. Regeneration Support Officer - Redundancy

The Committee noted that this post was funded by the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership and that the redundancy would also be funded by the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership.

RESOLVED that the post of Regeneration Support Officer be made redundant with effect from 30 September 2017.

15. Transformation Programme - Libraries Stock Management Restructure

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this restructure had led to five redundancies being proposed. This was essentially as a result of introducing a greater element of self service to the library service. Full consultation with staff and unions had been undertaken. Two of the staff affected had already been redeployed. This restructure had generated an annual saving of £92,000.

RESOLVED

- i) that the post holders listed in exempt Annexe B be declared redundant, as soon as reasonably practical, with the costs being met from the Structural Changes Fund (subject to any redeployment opportunities offered to those affected).
- ii) that the original and proposed structures detailed in Annexe A be noted.

16. Young People Substance Misuse Worker

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this service was being brought in-house and as a result this post was no longer required.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted that following the changes to the service and consultation with the post holder of Young Peoples Substance Misuse Worker, that the post holder be made redundant subject to the Councils redeployment process.

17. Review of Personal Assistants

The Chief Officer: Human Resources reported that this report notified the Committee of a further deletion of one PA post on the grounds of redundancy following the resignation of a Chief Officer and a proposal not to fill this position.

Members expressed concern that they had not been consulted on the decision to not appoint an Assistant Chief Executive. The Chairman reported that it was not in the Committee's remit to define the structure of the Council.

RESOLVED that the deletion of the post identified in exempt Appendix B with effect from 31 August 2017 on the grounds of redundancy be agreed.

CHAIRMAN