

**PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE  
21 OCTOBER 1998**

Present: Councillors Sargeant (Chairman), Bayle, Beadsley,  
Blatchford, Harrison, Mrs Keene, Mills, Ward and Wheaton

Substitution: Councillor Jones for Councillor Grayson

Apology for Absence: Councillor Grayson

9. **Substitute Members**

The Sub-Committee was advised that, in accordance with Standing Order 38, Councillor Jones was attending the meeting as substitute for Councillor Grayson.

10. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 6 July 1998 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. **Local Joint Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Committee held on 22 September 1998 be received and noted.

12. **Items for Decision**

In accordance with Standing Order 16, it was agreed without debate that item 10 should be considered in public.

13. **Personnel Policy Harmonisation – Grievance Procedure (Item 1)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to approve a revised Grievance Procedure as part of the harmonisation of the Council's personnel policies.

The officers answered a number of questions relating to the proposed procedure. A proposal to include a Member of the Council on each Panel at Stage 3 of the procedure was rejected, but it was agreed that the exclusion relating to staff on short term contracts should only apply to those on contracts of one year or less rather than the current two years or less.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to paragraph 5.1(d) being amended by the substitution of "one year" for "two years", the suggested new Grievance Procedure as outlined in Annex A of the report be adopted with effect from 1 November 1998.

14. **Personnel Policy Harmonisation – Redundancy Handling (Item 2)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to approve a revised procedure for dealing with workforce reductions.

The officers answered a number of questions regarding the procedure and agreed that section 5.4 should include a reference to non-discrimination on the grounds of age and that there should be some re-wording of section 5.6 to strengthen the need for prior consideration of staff facing redundancy for vacancies which may arise.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to some minor re-wording of sections 5.4 and 5.6 relating to selection, redeployment and trial periods by the Borough Personnel Manager, the suggested new Policy and Procedure for handling reductions in the workforce, contained in Annex A of the report, be adopted with effect from 1 November 1998.

15. **Personnel Policy Harmonisation – Lease Cars (Item 3)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to determine whether or not to continue providing lease cars for its staff.

The Sub-Committee discussed whether it was appropriate to expect an employee who was required to use a vehicle for their job to provide it themselves, or whether the employer should provide it either by way of the leasing arrangement or its own vehicle pool. In considering the issue, the Sub-Committee noted the comparisons which had been made between the value of the lease cars and the essential users' allowance which would be paid to staff who used their own vehicles for work purposes. In addition, it was noted that many employers made it a condition of employment for certain jobs that the applicants should have access to a car and be able to drive it. In this respect, the nationally agreed scheme of essential users provided a suitable framework to ensure that any staff required to provide a car for work could do so. In view of the foregoing and the significant steps being suggested to minimise the impact on the staff involved, it was agreed to cease offering lease cars on termination of the existing leases.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1 The Council ceases to offer lease cars to any employee on the termination of existing leases.
- 2 To facilitate a smooth transition to this position:
  - (a) Lease car agreements which expire prior to 31 March 1999 be extended to 1 April 1999.
  - (b) On expiry of a lease car entitlement, employees are offered an advance of pay to help with the initial cost of insurance premiums.
  - (c) Lease cars holders are offered the facility of a vehicle inspection by the Council's Vehicle Workshops at cost price when purchasing a replacement for their lease cars
  - (d) Where an employee purchases their existing lease car, the requirement for an Engineer's report be waived.

**16. Payroll in the Unitary Context (Item 4)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to determine whether the Council should adopt a common pay date for all staff and, if so, on which date salary payments should be made.

The Sub-Committee was advised that none of the consultees had supported harmonising the pay date on the final working day of the month. However, it had been concluded that, with the Council facing a difficult budget in the coming year, this change could generate an important saving without impacting on services or staffing levels. In view of this and the steps being taken to minimise the effect of the proposed change on staff, which would include a long lead in period, interest free loans and a staff helpline, it was agreed to accept the proposal. A proposal to defer the action until 1 April 2000 was rejected.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1 A common pay date of the last working day of the month be agreed for all staff with effect from 1 April 1999; and,
- 2 Interest free loans up to the value of 9/30ths of monthly salary be made available to all staff affected by the proposed change of pay date, repayable direct from salaries over a one year period.

**17. Personnel Policy Harmonisation – Relocation Scheme (Item 5)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report inviting it to adopt a revised Relocation Scheme as part of the harmonisation of the Council's personnel policies.

**RESOLVED:** That the suggested new Relocation Scheme, as outlined in Annex A of the report, be adopted with effect from 1 November 1998.

**18. Financial Support for Bracknell Industrial Mission (Item 6)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on a request from the Bracknell Industrial Mission for a continuation of the financial support which it had been given since 1993.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the service being provided offered excellent value for money and should continue to be supported. It was, however, agreed that, with the increased size of the Council's workforce, it might be necessary to increase the level of support from the existing half a day per week and it was therefore agreed to keep the situation under review.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1 The Council makes an annual donation to Bracknell Industrial Mission of £1,000; and,
- 2 Bracknell Industrial Mission's services and the donation be continually reviewed in relation to the Unitary Authority.

**19. Training and Development Strategy (Item 7)**

The Committee considered a report setting out a Training and Development Strategy for the Council which it was invited to approve.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the Strategy and asked for its congratulations to be conveyed to the officers who had prepared it.

**RESOLVED:** That the Training and Development Strategy outlined in the report be approved.

**20. Personnel Policy Harmonisation – Long Service Award Scheme (Item 8)**

The Committee considered a report inviting it to approve a revised Long Service Award Scheme as part of the harmonisation of the Council's personnel policies.

Although it was noted that a small number of the ex Borough Council's staff might appear to lose as the award was reduced from £400 to £250, when statutory deductions were taken into consideration, the difference between the value of a gift and a £400 payment would be minimal. Moreover, a substantial number of ex-County Council staff would see a significant increase in their Long Service Award.

**RESOLVED:** That the Long Service Award Scheme of the Council be harmonised with effect from 1 January 1999 on the following basis:

- 1 Adopt a common service-qualifying period for Long Service Awards of 20 years.
- 2 Give any award in the form of a gift to the value of £250 purchased by the Council from a retailer of the employee's choice.
- 3 Regard 20 years as the finite threshold and only pay an award on attainment of that. An employee leaving with service falling short of 20 years should not attract an award.
- 4 To make no additional payment for those with over 20 years service if they had already received Long Service recognition.
- 5 Allow an application to be made for recognition of non-continuous service within the parameters contained in paragraph 4.4.6.

**RECOMMENDED:** To the Strategy & Policy Committee that £30,000 be agreed from the contingency fund for this year's Long Service Awards.

21. **Items for Information**

The Committee received and noted the following item for information only:

Single Status Agreement – Implications for  
Bracknell Forest Borough Council (Item 9)

22. **Salary Structure – Market Influence (Item 10)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the need to deal with recruitment problems which were not related to an individual's substantive job and could not therefore be addressed through the Council's current job evaluation scheme.

Having discussed the proposal, the Sub-Committee agreed that the payment of a salary supplement would be the most appropriate way of meeting the aim of recruiting staff to the vacant posts provided the use of the scheme was closely monitored and subject to Member control.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1 A scheme of awarding fixed percentage market premia to certain agreed posts, where identifiable recruitment difficulties are experienced, be introduced;
- 2 The method of awarding market premia to posts outlined in paragraph 4.7 of the report be adopted;
- 3 All premia be awarded initially for two years and then be subject to annual review to ensure market requirements are met;
- 4 All the posts of Group Accountant be awarded a market supplement of 10% from 1 November 1998;
- 5 The post of Business Services Manager be awarded a market supplement of 10% from 1 November 1998;
- 6 The post of Communications Team Leader be awarded a market supplement of 10% from 1 November 1998; and
7. The costs of market supplements be met from within Departmental staffing budgets.

**RECOMMENDED:** To the Strategy & Policy Committee that the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Sub Committee be amended to include “responsibility for awarding market salary supplements”

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.00pm.

**CHAIRMAN**