

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
18 JUNE 2014
7.30 - 9.25 PM



Present:

Councillors McLean (Chairman), Mrs Birch (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Angell, Davison, Leake, Mrs Temperton and Worrall

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Ward

In Attendance:

Steven Caplan, Chief Officer: Property
Barry Flavin, Head of Building Control and Land Charges
Neil Haddock, Head of Performance and Resources, Adult Social Care
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Tony Madden, Chief Officer: Human Resources
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Bob Welch, Chief Adviser: Learning & Achievement
Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Birch declared an interest as the spouse of the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health & Housing.

2. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 12 February 2014 and 14 May 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

4. Minutes of Sub Groups

The Committee noted the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 3 June 2014 subject to the following amendments:

Minute 6: At the end of this minute, '1' would be amended to read 'A report on the issue for Councillors Angell, Leake, McLean and David Allais', and '2' regarding the preparation of a report for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission would be deleted.

Points had been raised by the trade unions at the Local Joint Committee regarding the possibility of extending consultations, which was where ever possible, agreed by management. The Chief Officer: Human Resources had taken the trade unions' comments on board.

5. **Retention of Market Premia - Senior Building Control Officer**

The Committee considered a report which requested the re-instatement of the previous 15% Market Premia payment for the post of Senior Building Control Surveyor, following unsuccessful attempts to recruit to the post on a permanent and temporary basis.

The Head of Building Control and Land Charges advised that the post had been vacant for eighteen months and there were two members of the team who were due for retirement in next eighteen months to two years. There was a need to recruit a senior member of staff with the ability to train others. There was a trainee in the team and it was hoped that this post could be developed. The private sector were offering attractive salaries for similar posts and agencies were receiving high demand for this type of post. Other local authorities were having similar issues with recruitment in this area.

Building Control Surveyors looked at the structure of buildings, fire protection, means of escape, drainage and means of access for disabled people, amongst others. In order for them to have credibility to the public, there was a need for them to be qualified and able to demonstrate the ability to undertake the technical work required.

RESOLVED that the 15% Market Premia previously allocated to the Senior Building Control Surveyor post be allowed to continue for current recruitment.

6. **Annual Performance Report on Retirements and Redundancies**

The Committee considered the Annual Report on Retirements and Redundancies outlining the Council's current policy on severance issues, showing capitalised costs and savings, and reporting on ill-health retirements.

There were six new pension discretions available to the Council, which the Chief Officer: Human Resources outlined in detail.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Committee noted the changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- ii. the Committee did not opt to enter into Shared cost Additional Pension Contributions (paragraph 5.2.2);
- iii. the Committee did not overturn the current default position on the 85 year rule (paragraph 5.2.4);
- iv. changes to employee contribution rates were made throughout the year rather than as at 1st April each year (paragraph 5.2.11);
- v. the Committee did not extend the 12 month standard period employees have to decide whether to keep current and past pensions separate (paragraph 5.2.15);
- vi. regular lump sum payments were included in the calculation of Assumed Pensionable Pay (paragraph 5.2.17);
- vii. the published discretions now included the Council's stance on additional payments after injury or accident (paragraph 5.2.20);

- viii. the Committee endorsed the policy statements in Appendix A;
- ix. the Committee endorsed the policy statements in Appendix B;
- x. the Committee noted the Annual Review information on ill health retirements and redundancies.

7. **Review of Dementia Services**

The Committee noted the report on the Review of Dementia Services. Redundancies arising from the Council decision to re-provision the in-house Dementia Service had been delegated to the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing. Fifteen posts were at risk and eleven of these had been successfully redeployed, with the remaining four post-holders volunteering for redundancy.

8. **Pay Negotiations NJC for Local Authority Employees 2014-15**

The Committee noted the report on Pay Negotiations with the National Joint Council for Local Authority Employees (NJC) 2014-15. The ballot took place earlier in June, and GMB and Unison had voted in favour of industrial action which would now take place on 10 July.

9. **Grounds Maintenance - TUPE Transfer Update**

The Committee noted the report on the progress of the TUPE transfer of Grounds Maintenance employees following the Public Realm procurement exercise.

10. **Exclusion of 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 item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to any individual (Items 11, 12, 13 & 14).

11. **Recruitment and Retention - Children's Social Care**

The Committee considered a report on recruitment and retention in Children's Social Care. The report recommended that additional payments be made to staff in key roles in Children, Young People and Learning in order to secure specialist services for children and families in need. Several possible options were explored.

The Chief Executive reported that there had been a significant increase in demand in Children's Social Care across the country, not just locally, and there was now a national shortage of qualified and experienced social workers. There were statutory requirements on all authorities dealing with this, which had led to a much greater use of staff agencies. Authorities trying to recruit experienced social workers were having difficulties and any organisation or agency paying higher rates had a destabilising effect on the market.

The Council's current vacancy rate was increasing and there was a need to rely on more agency staff. The cost of agency staff had doubled recently and this had a detrimental financial effect on the whole Council. Any solution would impact on every department and the aim was to review processes and structures. The use of 'golden

handcuffs' to attract suitably qualified staff would move the Council back into the mid range of salaries amongst Berkshire authorities.

There had been research into why the demand for Children's Social Care had increased and it was thought that a range of factors were involved, including the impact of high profile cases and being more aware of cases earlier. It was part of a broader national issue and there had been a 50% increase nationally of extreme neglect.

A Member of the Committee expressed concern that money was being spent on preventative care but the numbers of those needing a service was increasing. The Chief Executive indicated that the level of investment in preventative care could be a factor.

A range of initiatives had been put in place to encourage the recruitment of these key social worker posts needed in the Council. This 'golden handcuff' option to encourage recruitment was due to be in place for two years with a review possibly in March 2015.

Members of the Committee expressed concern about the short length of time agency staff remained in post and the number of changes in social worker which young people experienced. There was also a query as why the review could not be undertaken internally but the Chief Executive confirmed that a measured approach was needed and there was no capacity to undertake the review internally. Golden handcuffs had been used as an incentive at the Council before. However, there were no other comparable situations in other departments and the destabilisation in the market was recent.

Committee Members expressed concern about the chance of destabilising the workforce with this option. The Committee requested to be kept closely informed of how the proposal evolved. There would be a verbal update on the monitoring of the situation at the next meeting of the Committee in October.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Employment Committee endorsed the Executives suggested application of Key Staff Retention Payments ("Golden Handcuff") with effect from 1 July 2014 as set out in Option 2 Model C, the cost of which was added to the 2015-16 Commitment Budget;
- ii. a review of the structure and job design of Children's Social Care was commissioned to ensure the structure was appropriate to address the operational requirements and long term recruitment and retention issues;
- iii. the Department would continue to monitor the recruitment and retention situation and adjust the key staff payments accordingly.

12. **Proposed Redundancy - South East Grid for Learning**

The Committee considered a report on a proposed redundancy which arose from the review of the South East Grid for Learning (SEGfL).

SEGfL was a Regional Broadband Consortium (RBC) for South East Local Authorities, which arranged contracts for the provision of Broadband Services for schools under competitive tender.

A Steering Group had reviewed the way of working, which resulted in a change of staffing and a proposed redundancy. There was no cost to the Council as the severance cost would fall to SEGfL.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Employment Committee declared the post-holder, identified in the Exempt Appendix A, redundant with effect from 31 August 2014 in accordance with the terms set out in the Appendix A.

13. Facilities Review

The Committee considered a report on the review of Facilities management in the Council.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that Easthampstead House only needed a reduced reception facility. The outcome of the Facilities Review was the proposal for two redundancies in the team. There would be a new structure in the team with five building officers initially and that would be subject to a further review in six months time.

The Chairman requested that this be reviewed in January 2015.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Employment Committee approved the deletion of the posts identified in exempt appendices A and B with effect from 1st September 2014 and declared the post-holders redundant in accordance with the terms set out in those Exempt Appendices with the costs being met from the Structural Changes Fund.

14. ASCH&H - Complaints Manager's Role

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to the redundancy of the Complaints Manager Role in Adult Social Care.

The Head of Performance and Resources, Adult Social Care, reported that the number of complaints received to the section had halved and that it was not considered to be sustainable to continue to employ a 0.6 FTE complaints manager post with this small number of complaints. There would be a new complaints process in two years time and a different skills set might be needed.

The Chief Officer: Human Resources confirmed that where employees were on multiple contracts, the contracts needed to be dealt with separately and that even if an employee was on a fixed term contract, they would still be entitled to a redundancy payment if they had completed the minimum time working for the Council of two years.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Employment Committee approved the deletion of the post of Complaints Manager in Adult Social Care and declared the post-holder, identified in the Exempt Appendix A, redundant with effect from 1st August 2014 in accordance with the terms set out in the Appendix.

15. **Date of Next Meeting**

8 October 2014

CHAIRMAN