

STAFFING COMMITTEE
13th February, 2017

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Commissioner Ney and Councillor Cowles.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Alam and Watson.

9. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017

Consideration was given to the report presented by Sue Palfreyman, Head of Human Resources, which detailed how under the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 8 Pay Accountability, authorities were legally required to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement by the 31st March each year. This must be agreed by full Council and detail the remuneration of its Chief Officers and must then comply with the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year in making any determination.

The format and content of this Pay Policy was in line with previous practice and in accordance with guidance previously issued by the regional Local Government Employers Association. It was, therefore, felt to reflect good practice and it had not been considered appropriate to deviate from this.

Recommended:- That the Pay Policy Statement for 2017-18 (Appendix 1) be approved by full Council.

10. LIVING WAGE

Consideration was given to the report presented by Sue Palfreyman, Head of Human Resources, which set out the implications of increasing the Council's Living Wage rate from the current level of £7.93 to the new Living Wage Foundation rate of £8.45 per hour from April, 2017.

The Committee noted the Council's introduction of the Living Wage on 1st October, 2014 and the then adopted rate of £7.65. It was agreed that future increases would not follow the UK Living Wage, but would be aligned with the NJC pay award to create a Local Living Wage for Rotherham.

In order to preserve the integrity of the job evaluated pay and grading structure it was agreed that the Rotherham Living Wage would be achieved by payment of a supplement to raise the employee's pay to the Rotherham Living Wage level. A collective agreement was reached with the Trade Unions incorporating these arrangements and provided for an annual review to align to nationally agreed JNC increases.

The adoption of the most recently announced UK Living Wage rate at £8.45 would add a further £510k to the paybill for 2017/18. This had, however, been accounted for in the 2017/18 budget setting.

In terms of risk the Committee noted that the adoption of £8.45 per hour from April would have a significant impact on the Council's grading structure and how any further rises for 2018/19 would no longer be possible to adjust within band. This would create very significant problems for the Council in operating its grading.

There remained, however, two significant issues for schools arising from adoption of the Living Wage. Firstly, the increase in rates for the lowest paid Council employees who provided services to schools would impact on the schools' budget. Secondly, 20% of services provided to schools were done through PFI contracts which currently capped any increase to under 2% restricting the amount that could be passed on to recoup the costs of the Living Wage.

Recommended:- That the Council approve the increase in the Council's Living Wage rate to £8.45 from 1st April, 2017 and commit to annual review to consider budget position and grading risks.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

12. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Staffing Committee held on 13th December, 2016, consideration was given to the report presented by Shokat Lal, Assistant Chief Executive, detailing the proposals, which were subject to seeking collective agreement with the Trades Unions.

The proposals have changed significantly during the course of consultation and negotiation period, reducing from a number of areas of potential changes to terms and conditions down to one impacting directly on individual employees and related to adoption of an enforced Christmas closure.

Discussions with the Trade Unions have been constructive and the Trade Unions have committed to ballot their members on this single proposal and to report back by the 2nd March, 2017. If a collective agreement was reached this would assist in the delivery of £2m savings in the budget - £1m from the enforced closure and £1m from workforce management.

Discussion ensued on the implementation of the proposal or next steps if collective agreement could not be reached and the actions that would arise from this. Clear details would be communicated to staff alongside Frequently Asked Questions and who to contact should there be a need for further advice or support.

Resolved:- That the necessary action once known, in the event of a Collective Agreement being reached or not being reached, as set out in the report submitted, be approved.

13. HR1 NOTIFICATION

Further to Minute No. 5 of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 13th February, 2017 an update was provided on the HR1 Notification process and the sensitivities around issuing redundancy numbers, which must be completed before the end of March, 2017.

Discussion ensued on the issuing of the HR1 Notification and the timeframes for consultation which should cover the three-year period until 2020 in order to give both staff and Trade Unions as much information as possible to understand the Council's direction of travel in the context of the financial challenges that lay ahead.

Resolved:- (1) That the consultation requirements be noted.

(2) That consultation cover the three year period to 2020 and the HR1 Notifications be completed accordingly.