

HR Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Policy Committee held on Monday 21 January 2019 at 14.00 in the meeting room, Taunton Library.

Committee members present:

Cllr Chilcott (Chair)	Cllr W Wallace
Cllr C Lawrence (substituting for Cllr A Groskop)	Cllr L Leyshon
Cllr L Redman	

Officers present:

Chris Squire -Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development
Vicky Hayter – Strategic Manager HR Business Relations

Apologies:

Cllr A Groskop
Cllr P Ham

Declarations of Interest – agenda item 2

Cllr W Wallace, Cllr C Lawrence and Cllr L Leyshon declared personal interests as they are in receipt of a Local Government pension.

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2018 – agenda item 3

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2018 were accurate and the Chair signed them.

Public Question Time – agenda item 4

There were no members of the public present, and hence no questions asked, statements/comments made or petitions presented.

Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 – agenda item 5

The Committee considered this report which set out that it was a statutory requirement for the Council's Pay Policy Statement to be reviewed annually. Members were informed that there were no significant changes to the Policy, but a typographical error to the years included in the recommendations was highlighted.

The Strategic Manager, HR Business Relations, Vicky Hayter further informed the Committee: the policy being considered today would be implemented from 1 April 2019; the increase in the living wage to £8.21 per hour; the Council's lowest pay point is £9.00 per hour; and the implementation of a new pay spine from April 2019, with discussions on-going regarding grade boundaries.

Members proceeded to ask a number of questions, points raised included: the 50p per hour increase for lower grades; the ratio of the Chief Executives Remuneration relative to other council employees, and how this compares with other Local Authorities; Social Worker salary's including a comparison with other neighbouring

authorities and any impacts on recruitment; and the number of staff paid at the lowest point on the Council's pay scale.

The Director of HR & OD and the Strategic Manager HR Business Relations responded to the points raised, highlighting: the ratio of the highest and lowest paid staff was broadly in line with other Local Authorities, but varied hugely from the private sector; Social Worker recruitment success and the limited impact of comparatively small salary variations; the importance of supporting and training Social Workers; the larger annual percentage salary increases for lower paid staff; and that very few staff were paid at the lowest point on the pay scale, and are generally employed in schools.

Following consideration of the officer report and appendices the Committee agreed:

- Agree to recommend the Council to approve the Pay Policy Statement for the Council for 2018-19 attached as Appendix A to this report to have effect from 1st April 2019.
- Note the changed to the National Living Wage rate from 1st April 2019.
- Note the impact of the New Pay Spine from April 2019
- Note the pay award that was agreed in January 2018 for posts graded 1-3 for 2019/20.

Pension Discretions Policy – agenda item 6

The Committee considered this report which detailed the discretions employers have been given under the Local Government Pension Scheme. Officers provided an overview of the proposed changes and implications to aid the Committees understanding of this complex topic, highlighting that only minor amendments were proposed.

The Strategic Manager HR Business Relations, Vicky Hayter, further informed the Committee: regarding details of voluntary early retirement; that the average local authority pension is under £6000 per annum; that the average age of staff retirement has fallen; and that nationally it was proposed a cap would be applied limiting exit payments to a maximum of £95000, but this was pending government approval.

Members proceed to question officers regarding the points raised, with particular reference to how changes to teacher pensions would impact on the Council's finances.

Following consideration of the officer report the Committee agreed the recommendations:

- Minor amendments to the wording of SCC Pensions Discretion Policy are made to accurately reflect the wording of the LGPS Regulations as advised by Peninsula Pensions, relating to – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction where an active member chooses to voluntarily draw benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60 or normal retirement age. (Regulation B30 - 5)

- The policy decision for our pensions discretion under Regulation R31 – Power of employing authority to grant additional pension, is changed to allow only in exceptional circumstances, to accommodate any future unforeseen requests that may be affordable.

Any other urgent items of business – agenda item 7

The Committee questioned officers regarding: settlement status costs, noting that some councils were reimbursing these costs for their own employees; and sought clarification regarding the recruitment of a replacement post holder for the Interim Director of Finance.

The meeting closed at 14.33

Cllr Mandy Chilcott
Chair, HR Policy Committee