

**Council – 7 February 2008**

## **SINGLE STATUS PROJECT**

### **Report of the Senior Management Team**

**Statutory Powers:** Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Local Government Act 2000.

**Financial Implications** – a sum of £80,000 was approved for 2007/08 project costs for single status (Min. E.42/07). A further sum of up to £123,000 from the Strategic Issues Reserve of £254,000 is now being requested for the continuation of project costs into 2008/09 to support the Council's work towards Single Status as detailed in this report. This is a one-off project and it is essential that it is concluded during 2008/09.

**Purpose:** To request Members approval for further project funding to conclude single status. This report has been prepared as an urgent matter due to detailed costings being finalised latterly and the need to retain key project staff within Personnel and Payroll beyond 31 March 2008.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council RESOLVES to approve the sum of up to £123,000 to be met from the Strategic Issues Reserve.**

### **Background**

1. The 1997 national agreement on pay for employees under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) Conditions of Service for Local Government Services (often known as the Green Book) expected local authorities to move towards harmonisation of pay and conditions of service between the former manual and non-manual groups of staff.
2. In pursuit of this statutory obligation in March 2005 Personnel Panel recommended that a local pay review should be undertaken (Min. PP.27/04) together with a review of employment policy linked to pay reward and productivity. Subsequently the Executive concluded that whilst the Council had obligations to proceed with this review, it also provided an exceptional opportunity to modernise its pay and other reward structures, which would provide opportunities to facilitate increased staff flexibility and motivation (Min. E.131/04).
3. In order to provide strategic focus, the Personnel Panel is providing direction and receives progress reports from a 'Single Table' negotiating body established to work towards a local negotiated Collective Agreement for Single Status.
4. The Single Table consists of local and regional representatives from three trade union bodies (T&G, GMB and Unison) and management representatives, led by the Strategic Director (Operations) on behalf of the Head of Paid Service.

## Progress to Date

5. A significant amount of work has been undertaken through the Single Table under two broad headings; 'pay & reward' and 'productivity & flexibility'. An exercise of Job Evaluation is currently underway and it is hoped this will be completed by May 2008.
6. The project is being delivered through a small core project team within Personnel and Payroll. In order to complete the exercise in 2008/09 and deliver a final and legally binding Collective Agreement, including new employment policies and a new pay and grading structure, Members are asked to release funding for one-off project related costs as shown below:

	£
Project management and administration (2008/09)	90,500
IT software and support	7,500
Legal costs (one-off)	15,000
Project contingency	<u>10,000</u>
	<b>£123,000</b>

## Strategic Risk Assessment

7. A detailed risk analysis of the single status project and the key strategic risks are listed below.

<b>Opportunity</b>	
Modernised employment arrangements through the delivery of single status for all council employees in line with the national agreement.	
<b>Issues</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Failure to conclude the equal pay review and thereby expose the authority to external intervention and exposure to equal pay claims.	The Council is carrying out a full equal pay review which will ensure equal pay for equal value jobs and thereby limit equal pay claims.
Failure to ensure adequate resources to implement single status.	Subject to affordability the council will determine the level of resources available and how they wish to be applied.
Disruption of services due to loss of goodwill with staff.	The council will use its best endeavours to ensure staff are adequately prepared for the implementation of single status and that further communication, advice and support is provided during the roll out of the project. Notwithstanding these measures this will clearly be a challenging time.

## **Conclusion**

8. Whilst the Council has obligations to move to Single Status as a good employer within the public sector it also has responsibilities to modernise and improve access to services for its customers. In undertaking such a thorough review the Council will be better placed to deliver the Government's modernisation agenda and to improve the flexibility of services for its users.

Senior Management Team

Council  
7 February 2008