ITEM **ITEM**

Personnel Panel – 13 April 2006

SINGLE STATUS - UPDATE AND IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

Report of the Head of Personnel and Payroll

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1972

Financial Implications: None at this stage however the Implementation Agreement does provide the framework for undertaking a Pay and Grading Review which may result in additional future costs to the Council.

Purpose: This report updates Members on progress made with the Single Status project since the last Personnel Panel in February and asks Members to agree to the Council signing an Implementation Agreement towards achieving Single Status as detailed in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Personnel Panel be recommended to:-

I. Note the further progress made with the Single Status Project

II. Agree to the Council signing the Implementation Agreement as detailed in this Report.

Progress since the Last Personnel Panel

1. The Joint Single Table negotiating group made up from the trade unions and management representatives has met a further three times since the Officers' last up-date.

2. A number of Draft Policies and Procedures have been discussed covering matters such as Alternative Working Patterns; Travel and Subsistence; Learning and Development; and a draft Policy for the introduction of a Competency Framework.

3. The nature of the project means that rates of progress can vary depending upon matters being discussed. Matters that have a financial impact naturally require more careful consideration by the Single Table and often require more research. It is pleasing to note however, that steady progress is being made and that negotiations continue in a positive and constructive atmosphere. To date the

Single Table has agreed in the order of fifteen new or revised employment policies to a final draft stage under the Single Status project linked to improving flexibility and productivity of working arrangements.

4. In respect of Job Evaluation, since Members agreed to the use of the London Job Evaluation scheme, initial joint training has been held and work has commenced on the sample benchmarking posts. In total 39 posts have been jointly identified and agreed by trade unions and management for this first tranche of the job evaluation exercise. Further training of job evaluation panellists will be rolled out in May. The intention is to commence the major evaluation exercise in June. The timetable envisages that the evaluation (covering slightly over discrete 300 posts) will be completed by November 2006.

5. The project has now progressed to an important milestone. Both the Council and the Trade Unions need to sign an Implementation Agreement to confirm the various job evaluation principles and processes discussed so far as well as set out the progress made toward joint policy development. The Agreement is necessary to move the project on to the next stage (April 2006 to March 2007).

Implementation Agreement

6. The Single Table negotiating group has jointly produced the Agreement attached to this report. External specialist advice has been sought to ensure the document is technically sound and will deliver the desired result. Comparisons have been made to similar agreements developed by other Authorities and Officers are satisfied that the wording of the Implementation Agreement satisfies the requirements on the Council made by the 2004 National Single Status Agreement as signed by the trade unions and National Employers.

7. Members should be aware that the Implementation Agreement does not in itself bind the Council and the Trade Unions to changes in employment terms and conditions of service. The mechanism needed for this to take effect would be a **Local Collective Agreement.** The expectation is that the Local Collective Agreement will be signed following final and detailed negotiations at the Single Table with the results of theses negotiations having been subsequently endorsed by the Council (through the Personnel Panel or other appropriate committee) and by the Trade Unions via a ballot or liaison with their membership.

8. The six new / updated Personnel Policies already approved by the Personnel Panel at its meeting on the 9 February will be incorporated into this Local Collective Agreement together with other agreed employment Policies developed.

9. Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigating Actions
Progress made to date on Single Status is not consolidated	Implementation Agreement secures use of the London Job Evaluation Scheme and its supporting procedures
Claim for breach of contract as a result of not implementing the National Single Status Agreement	Wording of the Implementation Agreement satisfies the implementation stage of the National Agreement
Process of incorporating any changes to pay and grading and the application of new policies and procedures is flawed.	External specialist advice supports the Draft Implementation Agreement as the precursor to a Local Collective Agreement to be signed at the conclusion of the Single Status project

Reg Hambly
Head of Personnel and Payroll

Personnel Panel
13 April 2006

Paula Brooks
Strategic Director (Operations)