

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL PANEL
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr M F Saltern - Chairman

* Cllr J A Westacott - Vice-Chairman

ø Cllr R F Croad

* Cllr R J Tucker

ø Cllr T J Hewitt

* Denotes attendance

ø Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Chief Executive; Head of Human Resources; Single Status Project Manager; Member Support Services Manager and Union Representatives from GMB and Unison.

PP.14/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9 July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PP.15/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none were made.

PP.16/08 PROGRESS TOWARDS SINGLE STATUS

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the progress of Single Status negotiations to date and sought further direction regarding the execution of various employment policies and parameters around implementation of the results of Job Evaluation.

The report emphasised that whilst the Council, as a good employer, had obligations to advance Single Status, it also had responsibilities to modernise and improve access to services for its customers. In undertaking such a review, it was felt that the Council would be better placed to deliver the Government's modernisation agenda and improve the flexibility of services for its users.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) standardising the mileage rate paid to staff. Union representatives expressed their concern at the proposal to reduce the mileage rate paid in line with the Inland Revenue rate (currently 40p per mile) for both Casual and Essential car users, especially when considering the escalating cost of fuel. In response, officers advised that the travel element should not be looked at in isolation, as when considering the overall single status proposals, there were a number of other benefits (e.g. the proposed changes to pay scales).

In sympathising with the escalating fuel costs, Members questioned whether the current Inland Revenue rate was a fair reflection of the price of fuel. On balance, the Panel felt that to align and standardise the mileage rate to that of the Inland Revenue rate was a sensible and logical progression;

- (b) an eligibility criteria of 1,500 business miles per annum before the essential allowance applied. Members believed that the proposal to enforce an eligibility criterion was a sensible control measure and it was noted that some staff presently classified as casual car users could be eligible to become essential users. Officers confirmed that they would look at the issue of staff who tended to work outside of normal working hours, but that this would be done separately from the Single Status project;
- (c) paying all essential car users a lump sum based on engine size. The Panel supported the suggestion that the lump sum be based on the middle band engine size (1000cc to 1199cc), which equated to £849 per year. With regard to linking the rate to the NJC rate, the Panel was minded to keep this matter under review;
- (d) Annual Leave Entitlement. The Panel expressed its support for Option 3 (as outlined in the presented report) and welcomed both the improved harmonisation in terms and conditions and the shift in emphasis towards benefiting lower paid members of staff;
- (e) Market Supplement Pay. In principle, the Panel was in favour of the payment of market supplements as and when required. However, Members acknowledged some of the concerns of the union representatives and emphasised the importance of minimising the time taken to undertake the market testing process.

As an update on the progress towards Single Status, the Project Manager made a presentation entitled: 'Designing the New Pay and Grading Structure.' In response to a question, the union representatives confirmed that they were very content with the transparency of the process and whilst the project delay was unfortunate, it was felt that the painstaking nature of the process was absolutely necessary.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made to date by the Single Table be noted;
2. That the travel allowance changes (as detailed in Appendix A, paragraph A2 of the presented report) be endorsed;
3. That Annual Leave Entitlement Option 3 (as detailed in appendix A, paragraph B of the presented report) be endorsed;
4. That in principle, the Market Supplement Pay approach (as outlined in Appendix B of the presented report) be supported.

(Meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 2.50 pm).

Chairman