

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL PANEL
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2010**

MEMBERS

* Cllr M F Saltern - Chairman

* Cllr J A Westacott - Vice-Chairman

* Cllr R F Croad

ø Cllr R J Tucker

* Denotes attendance

ø Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance and participating:
Item 7 (Minute PP.19/09 below refers) Cllr J H Baverstock

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Resources), Head of Human Resources and
Member Support Services Manager;

Items 5 and 7 (Minutes PP.18/09 and PP.19/09 below refer): Personnel Manager;
and

Item 14 (Minute PP.27/09 below refers): Head of Building Control.

PP.15/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PP.16/09 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman advised that, subject to the agreement of the Panel, he proposed that the Occupational Health Service Review item (PP.21/09 below refers) would be more appropriately considered in exempt session.

PP.17/09 **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.18/09 **PROGRESS OF 2009 APPRAISAL SCHEME**

The Panel considered a report which informed of the current system of staff appraisals and noted progress on the current round of appraisals.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the drive to improve the appraisal system. Whilst progress had been made since 2007, the Panel still felt there to be scope for further improvements;
- (b) updated figures tabled to the meeting. Since the agenda publication, it was confirmed that 77% of staff had now received an appraisal and the Panel wished to commend those service areas which had completed all of their appraisals. The Panel also noted that these figures did not include Environment Service Operatives and officers were currently working towards adapting the scheme for these employees;
- (c) the problems with the existing hierarchical system. Members recognised the merits of a cascading system but also conceded that the process was not always as effective as it worked its way through the staff hierarchy. Consequently, the Panel expressed its support for a part hierarchical approach to be adopted, with an indicative timescale of four months for the completion of all staff appraisals in the organisation;
- (d) salary increments. The Panel felt that there should be a much closer link between the award of salary increments to staff and the staff appraisal system.

RESOLVED

That:-

1. all officers be reminded of the importance of providing timely and constructive staff appraisals for all members of staff;
2. the current system of staff appraisal be modified to introduce a part hierarchical approach, with all staff appraisals being completed within a four month period;
3. all managers be recommended to set a target within their own appraisal for the completion of constructive appraisals for their staff within the agreed timescale; and
4. considerable emphasis should be placed on all staff to acknowledge personal responsibility to ensure that they receive a constructive and timely appraisal each year.

PP.19/09 BACKING YOUNG BRITAIN IN THE SOUTH HAMS

Consideration was given to a report which informed of the proposal to launch a 'Backing Young Britain in the South Hams' scheme. It was intended that the scheme would be designed to offer young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEETs) the opportunity to gain work experience with the Council.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the comments of the Member Champion for Children and Young People. In support of the scheme, the Member Champion specifically highlighted:-
- that there were almost 1,000,000 NEETs in the UK at present, with many of these being highly intelligent but unable to currently find employment;
 - the potential for the Council to become involved through both young people undertaking work experience for a six month period and a group of NEETS being under the supervision of a Foreman to work on a designated Council project. By virtue of a pilot scheme, it was hoped that two enthusiastic NEETS could undertake a six month work experience role with the Council;
 - the support given by Human Resources. However, this was somewhat offset by barriers which had been created by the bureaucratic approach taken by some external agencies; and
 - that these initiatives would be at no financial cost to the Council.
- (b) the need for Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. The Member Champion advised that the two NEETS he had in mind to utilise the pilot scheme were both over the age of 18 and such checks were therefore not required. However, and in acknowledging the importance of 16-18 year olds also gaining employment, the Member did accept that if the scheme was successful and rolled out, then certain officers may need to be CRB checked.

In conclusion, the Panel wished to extend its full support for this initiative and extended its gratitude for the continued hard work and efforts of the Member Champion.

RESOLVED

That the initiative to launch the 'Backing Young Britain in the South Hams' scheme be noted and fully supported.

PP.20/09 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

PP.21/09 **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE REVIEW**

A report was considered which informed the Panel of the current working of the Occupational Health Service (OHS) and sought approval for implementation of a number of proposed activities to improve the service and reduce costs.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A Member highlighted the importance of providing a Counselling Service;
- (b) Whilst accepting that OHS providers generally represented good value for money for employers, the Panel emphasised the need for officers to be rigorous during the negotiations.

RESOLVED

That officers should:-

1. proceed to review the service with the current Occupational Health Service (OHS) providers and seek improvements; and
2. review and consider alternative providers with a view to improving the service and, ideally, at a reduced cost.

PP.22/09 **THE EFFECT OF SALARY INCREMENTS PAYABLE ON 1 APRIL 2010**

The Panel considered an exempt report which informed of the financial costs involved in awarding staff salary increments on 1 April 2010.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the budgetary implications of the staff salary increments for 2010/11. Officers confirmed that budgetary provision had already been made for the payment of increments for 2010/11. Nonetheless, Members did note that there was a subsequent cost to the Council Taxpayer arising from such pay awards;
- (b) an additional recommendation. An addition was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** which sought to link the appraisal system to the payment of salary increments. The Panel believed that the current process whereby increments were payable based only upon the judgement of the Head of Service was unsatisfactory. Whilst not wishing to introduce any performance related pay scheme, the Panel felt that there was scope to link the appraisal system to the payment of increments. As a control mechanism, a Member also stated that Internal Audit could review a proportion of appraisal forms to ensure that this was being adhered to. When put to the vote, this addition was declared **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED

That:-

1. the report be noted; and
2. salary increments should be payable, subject to satisfactory performance (as evidenced by staff appraisals).

PP.23/09 **INTERIM PAY ARRANGEMENTS**

An exempt report was presented which informed of the process and outcome of interim pay reviews. These reviews had been conducted to evaluate the grade of posts that had changed significantly since the beginning of the single status job evaluation process.

The Panel was given assurances that the process had been particularly extensive and the financial implications arising from these reviews had been funded from the existing Single Status Reserve.

RESOLVED

That the process and outcome of the interim pay reviews be noted.

PP.24/09 **TONE LEISURE UPDATE**

Members considered an exempt report which provided an update on progress made towards reaching an agreement with Tone Leisure to remove mutual obligations arising from Single Status and contained in the Business Transfer Agreement.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the numerous meetings held with Tone Leisure representatives in an attempt to find a satisfactory way forward. In acknowledging the work involved in reaching this position, Members expressed their gratitude to those officers who had been involved in the negotiations;
- (b) support for the outlined proposal. In accordance with the resolution of the Executive meeting held on 8 October 2009 (Minute E.54/09 refers), both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel wished for their support for the outlined proposal to be formally recorded.

RESOLVED

That the progress made to date be noted and support be given to the outlined proposal.

PP.25/09 **HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DELIVERY – STAFFING ISSUE**

The Panel considered an exempt report which informed of a proposed early retirement.

RESOLVED

That the Early Retirement on the grounds of Interest of Efficiency (as detailed in the presented report) be approved.

PP.26/09 **STRATEGIC PLANNING & ECONOMY – STAFFING ISSUE**

An exempt report was considered which informed of a proposed redundancy arising from progress with the Shared Services programme.

RESOLVED

That the voluntary redundancy (as detailed in the presented report) be approved.

PP.27/09 **DEVON BUILDING CONTROL PARTNERSHIP – STAFFING REVIEW**

Consideration was given to an exempt report which presented the outcome of the staffing structure for the Devon Building Control Partnership.

RESOLVED

That the early retirement in the interests of efficiency (as detailed in the presented report) be agreed.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.35 pm).

Chairman