

**Agenda for consultative meeting of the
Personnel Committee
Friday, 18th February, 2022, 9.00 am**



Members of Personnel Committee

Councillors I Thomas (Chair), V Ranger (Vice-Chair),
M Allen, M Armstrong, P Arnott, D Bickley,
K Blakey, F Caygill, B De Saram, I Hall,
P Hayward, R Lawrence, J Loudoun,
N Hookway and C Pepper

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Venue: online via zoom

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10 February 2022

**Important - this meeting will be conducted online and recorded by Zoom only.
Please do not attend Blackdown House.
Members are asked to follow the [Protocol for Remote Meetings](#)**

This meeting is being recorded by EDDC for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the Council's Youtube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNHQruge3LVl4hcgRnbwBw>

Public speakers are now required to register to speak – for more information please use the following link: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say-at-meetings/all-other-public-meetings/#article-content>

Between 8th December 2021 to 11th May 2022, the Council has delegated much of the decision making to officers. Any officer decisions arising from recommendations from this consultative meeting will be published on the webpage for this meeting in due course. All meetings held can be found via the [Browse Meetings](#) webpage.

- 1 Public speaking
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 January 2022 (Pages 3 - 6)
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 January 2022.
- 3 Apologies
- 4 Declarations of interest
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7 **Reward Review Next Steps** (Pages 7 - 9)

[Decision making and equalities](#)

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at online via zoom on 27 January 2022

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.51 am

17 Public speaking

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

18 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November 2021

The minutes of the consultative meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 30 November 2021 were agreed.

19 Declarations of interest

None declared.

20 Matters of urgency

None.

21 Confidential/exempt item(s)

None.

22 Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

The Committee are required to consider and make recommendations to Council on the Pay Policy Statement, on an annual basis. The revised statement presented to the Committee contained all information as required by the Localism Act.

The committee discussed:

- The ratio of lower to higher roles, which remains below the adopted rate of 10:1

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Pay Policy Statement for April 22 – March 23 be adopted.

23 Reward Review update

The report presented to Committee outlined the improvements identified by the independent reward review. Further work was required to determine how to implement those improvements and the budgetary impact those changes would have. The findings did highlight the good governance and controls in place to ensure pay fairness and transparency.

Benchmarking had revealed that some roles were not in sync with the job market. With agreement of the committee, work would continue with the consultants and the union to find ways of improving the structure to resolve the issues.

Comments from the committee included:

- Working within prepared budget for 2022/23;
- Concerns about existing staffing gaps as salaries were not attractive enough; the other benefits of the organisation were advertised to boost applications;
- A desire to look to becoming a Real Living Wage Employer.

The Committee requested the HR Manager to undertake further work on the Reward Review, including the development of detailed options and costings, with this additional work funded from existing related budget of 2022/23.

The Committee also agreed that no view was given at this stage about whether the Council should become a Real Living Wage Employer and instead, this should form part of the Reward Review options and costings.

RECOMMENDED to Senior Officer for approval:

That further work be undertaken on the Reward Review including the development of detailed options and costings, with this additional work funded from some of the monies already allocated to pay within the 2022/23 budget.

24 **People Data Report**

The committee received the report on workforce key data. The HR Manager highlighted the following to the committee:

- **Headcount** slightly reduced;
- **Vacancies and recruitment** slight decrease in vacancies, with the time taken to fill increasing slightly due to the Christmas period;
- **Market supplements** slightly reduced but still at a high level;
- **Agency workers** reduced in number;
- **Turnover** remains at around 1% per month;
- **Sickness absence** decreased.

The committee discussed:

- More detailed information on agency staff was held in individual services, but the HR team continued to work with services to understand how agency workers are used. Invariably agency workers were often required for seasonal needs;
- Specific skill shortages in local government in some areas and the need to ensure that the whole package of working for the local authority including the benefits, were promoted to attract candidates;
- Appreciation to all those involved for setting up the committee, which now helped highlight staffing data to Councillors to help support decision making.

The committee noted the report.

25 **Personnel Forward Plan**

Cllr Millar requested that his motion, originally put to the Overview Committee on 18 November 2021, be put on the Personnel Committee Forward Plan. The motion set out that a public register of interests for senior officers should be created and published.

The Monitoring Officer had commented on the submitted motion that “It is a legal requirement for member’s Register of Interests to be made publicly available. There is no such obligation in relation to employees of any level. All officers complete a register of interest that it is held by the Council. Consideration will need to be given to what level of

officer the disclosure would affect and in that regard the legal position and human rights / data protection considerations. If there was a recommendation to require this in relation to current officers, as opposed to in the future, it has the potential to affect the terms and conditions of employment and therefore it will need to involve discussion with the Union.”

The Chair advised that he did not consider that the motion was appropriate for the committee to investigate, particularly as there was no legal requirement to do so. Cllr Loudoun echoed this decision, in that he felt there was no benefit to undertaking such a register. In particular he highlighted the trust Councillors had put in Senior Officer to make decisions on their behalf, so that they may continue to meet virtually.

The Leader also agreed with the comments of the Chair and Cllr Loudoun, expressing that if he were an employee, he would question why such a register was required when Councillors and officers operated on trust.

In response, Cllr Millar commented that there were other authorities that held such a register, and that he was not implying any impropriety of officers. His motivation was to demonstrate to the public that there were no concerns. He commented that he took on board the comments of the committee.

The Chair welcomed that recognition. He stated that there was strong trust between leaders and senior officers, which was apparent from the evidence of working through the pandemic, keeping businesses going and keeping the public engaged through that difficult time.

The Chief Executive thanked the committee for their support; and confirmed that he had previous discussion with the union who were supportive of the comments made by the Chair.

The committee agreed the Forward Plan as set out in the agenda.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Thomas (Chair)
M Armstrong
P Arnott
K Blakey
B De Saram
R Lawrence
J Loudoun

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
D Ledger
P Millar

Officers in attendance:

Joanna Fellows, Corporate HR Manager
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Mark Williams, Chief Executive

Councillor apologies:

- V Ranger
- D Bickley
- I Hall
- N Hookway

Chair

Date:



Report to: Personnel Committee

Date of Meeting 18th February 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

Reward Review Next Steps

Report summary:

To seek Committee agreement to commission further consultancy work on the Reward Review, in light of revised information regarding costs.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That the Personnel Committee agree to further external consultancy work being undertaken on the Reward Review in line with the revised costs.

Reason for recommendation:

Following further liaison with the external consultants regarding the work involved to implement the next stage of the Reward Review, the costs of the work are in excess of the indicative figure provided to Committee on 27th January 2022.

Officer: Jo Fellows, HR Manager.

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken once the implications of this work are further understood.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; Failure to address pay issues may impact on recruitment and retention and therefore service delivery. Detailed risk analysis of the potential options to address this will form part of the next steps for this work.

Links to background information The Reward Review was agreed by Committee on 2nd September 2021 ([210902 Personnel Ctte report Independent Review Workforce Priorities.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)) and updates on progress were provided on 30th November 2021 ([211130 Recruitment Retention Update for Personnel Ctte FINAL.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)) and 27th January 2022 ([220127 Reward Review report to Personnel Ctte FINAL.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)).

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

1. External consultants have undertaken initial work to review the Council's pay and grading structure and pay rates. Their findings, which were shared with Committee on 27th January 2022, highlighted that we have good governance and controls in place to ensure pay fairness and transparency, but we have a high number of market supplements and some of our roles are not in line with current market rates. The findings indicated that there was not necessarily a simple resolution and the issues needed further exploration.
2. It was therefore agreed with Committee that further work would be undertaken by the external consultants to identify potential options for change and their related costs. It was agreed that this additional work would be funded from a small proportion of the £300-£500k which has already been built into the 2022/23 budget for pay purposes. The Committee report advised an indicative cost of no more than £20k for this work.
3. However, following further discussion with the external consultants it is evident that the cost of the work is between £37k and £44.5k. The work includes:
 - 3.1. Further analysis of existing job roles and pay and grading structure.
 - 3.2. Design of potential options and cost modelling (including the implications of becoming a Real Living Wage employer).
 - 3.3. Provision of relevant information to support internal consultation.
 - 3.4. Finalising of preferred option, detailed costings and advice on implementation.
4. Consideration has been given to whether some or all of the above activities could be undertaken in-house. However, there is not internal capacity to progress this work in a timely manner to take account of current recruitment and retention risks. External support also provides the Council with specialist and independent reward knowledge, including access to commercial pay benchmarking and cost modelling tools and advice on measures to mitigate against equal pay and other risks associated with a review of pay and grading arrangements.
5. If agreed, the work would be commissioned via the existing procurement framework, with the aim of commencing as soon as possible. The consultants have advised that the work will take approximately ten weeks.
6. This is a complex area of work which needs to balance organisational needs (including future proofing), alongside the wider context. Further external support would enable the Council to continue to make good progress in reviewing reward arrangements to mitigate against recruitment and retention challenges.

Financial implications:

A budget of £25k was agreed for this work by Council. As outlined in the report and previous updates to the Committee the initial work has identified further analysis and recommended solutions are required. This additional work is going to require increasing the budget by £45k. The 2022/23 budget (subject to final adoption) includes a sum of £450k for possible costs associated with the General Fund to implement the final scheme. It is proposed that part of this budget is used to meet the additional consultant costs.

Legal implications:

There are no specific legal implications requiring comment.