

Licensing and General Purposes Committee

Date and Time - **Monday 19 April 2021 – 6:30pm**

Venue - **Remote Meeting**

Councillors appointed to the Committee:

Councillor A.S. Mier (Chairman), S.J. Coleman (Vice-Chairman), R.K. Bird, G.S. Browne, T.J.C. Byrne, G.C. Curtis, B.J. Drayson (ex-officio), K.M. Field, K.M. Harmer, C.A. Madeley, R.B. Thomas and H.L. Timpe + 1 vacancy.

Substitute Members: C.A. Bayliss, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, P.J. Gray and Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and General Purposes Committee held on 18 January 2021, at a later date, as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

The Chairman to ask if any Member present is substituting for another Member and, if so, to declare his/her name as substitute Member and the name of the absent Member.

3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM

To consider such other items as the Chairman decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Head of Paid Service by 12 Noon on the day of the meeting.

4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the personal interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct. Members are reminded of the need to repeat their declaration immediately prior to the commencement of the item in question.

5. REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY AWARD (Pages 1 - 4)

This agenda can be made available in large print, Braille, audiotape/CD or in another language upon request. For all enquiries – please contact louise.hollingsworth@rother.gov.uk (Tel: 01424 787815)

**Rother District Council's aspiring to deliver
an Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council; Sustainable Economic Prosperity;
Stronger, Safer Communities; and a Quality Physical Environment.**

6. **STAFFING DIGEST - APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021** (Pages 5 - 8)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 9 April 2021

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Licensing and General Purposes Committee
Date:	19 April 2021
Title:	Review of Local Pay Award
Report of:	Chief Executive
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To consider the 2021 staff pay award and make recommendations as appropriate.

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Members' views are sought for the 2021 pay settlement in the light of budget forecasts.

Introduction

1. As Members are aware, the financial situation the Council faces remains challenging for the foreseeable future. A major component in the Council's budget is its staffing and discussions have been on going with Staff Side on the position for a pay award for this year.
2. Members' views are being sought on the way ahead for this settlement to enable negotiation with UNISON / Staff Side to be progressed. It is also important to realise that any pay settlement is not a one off; it is then built into our budgets for the future years. Members are also reminded that any pay award agreed for staff is also applied to Members' allowances.

Rother Local Pay Award

3. The Chief Executive maintains a regular dialog with UNISON / Staff Side and as would be expected the pay award has been discussed. The expectation on their part will be for an annual pay award that reflects the current outlook. The consultation period with UNISON has closed and they have provided no further comments.
4. At the time of writing this report, the national pay negotiations for local government have not been settled for the 2021/22 financial year. The National Joint Council (NJC) original request was for a 10% award. Offers are expected to be made to the trade unions mid to late May.
5. This year the government have expected local government to follow the policy of no cost of living increase for staff earning a full time equivalent salary of more than £24,000. However, they expect a flat rate of at least £250 per annum to be paid for staff earning below this threshold.
6. It is expected that inflation will remain low following the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. In previous years, the Council has matched the Living Wage (from the Living Wage Foundation, and distinct from the National Living Wage) for our permanent staff. The living wage foundation rate for 2021/22 (financial

year) is £9.50, which is an increase of 20p per hour. All Council officers are paid at this rate or above this rate.

7. Within this debate it should also be kept in mind the Council's future position in the employment market. Recruitment of professional staff remains challenging in some disciplines as the pool of local government professionals appears to be diminishing. In addition, the Council has proactively worked to narrow the gap between ourselves and neighbouring authorities on pay and, as these are often our main competitors, it is necessary to be conscious of their pay.
8. As part of setting the annual revenue budget for this year, Rother's pay award for 2021 was budgeted at 2% and this figure has been used in the agreed Medium-Term Financial Plan for future years. For each 1% increase in pay, based on the budgeted establishment, this would cost in the order of £97,500 including employee on-costs (NI, Superannuation). If the Council were to align with the Government policy for a pay freeze for those earning over £24,000 (based on equivalent full time salary) and a flat rate £250 (pro rata for part-time workers) for those earning under this amount, the cost would be in the order of £37,000 in a full year.
9. Members are aware that the proposed spending review for local government has been further delayed and no information is currently available for the likely financial settlement for 2022/23. It is therefore sensible to agree a one-year settlement rather than a multi-year settlement.

Conclusion

10. The Council needs to determine its preferred pay award for September 2021. Guidance from Government indicates that there should be no cost of living increase this year and a flat rate of £250 per annum applied to those staff currently on our paygrades for S5 and below. In the absence of the national award being agreed, there is no benchmark to use in coming to a view save for the amounts budgeted for by other Councils. The Council's finances are such that to go beyond the budgeted 2% will cause further financial hardship as compensatory savings will need to be delivered. Furthermore, consideration needs to be given to the Council's view on the Living Wage (from the Living Wage Foundation).

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston		
Report Contact Officer:	Maria Benford – Human Resources Manager		
e-mail address:	Maria.benford@rother.gov.uk		
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Proposed pay scales		
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None		
Background Papers:	None		
Reference Documents:	None		

Proposed Pay Scales - 1 September 2021

PAY STEP	PAY SCALE	ANNUAL SALARY	HOURLY RATE	PAY STEP	PAY SCALE	ANNUAL SALARY	HOURLY RATE
APP	APP	11718.00	6.07	35	PO2	40569.00	21.03
1	S1	14165.00	7.34	36	PO2	41640.00	21.58
2	S1	14567.00	7.55	37	PO2	42697.00	22.13
3	S1	15113.00	7.83	38	PO2	43793.00	22.70
4	S1	15174.00	7.87	39	PO2	44868.00	23.26
5	S1	16075.00	8.33	40	PO3	45879.00	23.78
6	S1	18328.00	9.50	41	PO3	47002.00	24.36
7	S2	18328.00	9.50	42	PO3	48081.00	24.92
8	S2	18498.00	9.59	43	PO3	49148.00	25.47
9	S2	19004.00	9.85	44	PO3	50209.00	26.02
10	S3	19402.00	10.06	45	MG1	51518.00	26.70
11	S3	19816.00	10.27	46	MG1	53421.00	27.69
12	S3	20268.00	10.51	47	MG1	55328.00	28.68
13	S3	20749.00	10.75	48	MG1	57233.00	29.67
14	S4	20937.00	10.85	49	MG1	58825.00	30.49
15	S4	21702.00	11.25	50	MG2	60989.00	31.61
16	S4	22489.00	11.66	51	MG2	63162.00	32.74
17	S4	23298.00	12.01	52	MG2	65342.00	33.87
18	S5	23897.00	12.39	53	MG3	66941.00	34.70
19	S5	24601.00	12.75	54	MG3	69424.00	35.98
20	S5	25392.00	13.16	55	MG3	71891.00	37.26
21	S5	26200.00	13.58	56	MG3	74368.00	38.55
22	S6	26772.00	13.88	57	MG4	74498.00	38.61
23	S6	27681.00	14.35	58	MG4	77263.00	40.05
24	S6	28606.00	14.83	59	MG4	80031.00	41.48
25	LSO	30727.00	15.93	60	MG4	82782.00	42.91
26	LSO	31718.00	16.44	61	MG5	91716.00	47.54
27	LSO	32652.00	16.92	62	MG5	95117.00	49.30
28	LSO	33629.00	17.43	63	MG5	98517.00	51.06
29	LSO	34591.00	17.93	64	MG5	101901.00	52.82
30	PO1	35193.00	18.24	65	MG6	115000.00	59.61
31	PO1	36123.00	18.72	66	MG6	118795.00	61.58
32	PO1	37159.00	19.26	67	MG6	122715.00	63.61
33	PO1	38271.00	19.84	68	MG7	126764.00	65.71
34	PO1	39517.00	20.48	69	MG7	130947.00	67.87
				70	MG7	135000.00	69.97

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Licensing and General Purposes Committee
Date:	19 April 2021
Title:	Staffing Digest – April 2020 to March 2021
Report of:	Human Resources Manager
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To consider the human resource activities and issues through the 2020/21 financial year.

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. This Staffing Digest covers the period April 2020 to March 2021, aiming to give Members an appreciation of progress in the field of staff management.

Recruitment

2. Recruitment has remained active during this period despite the challenges of the pandemic. Turnover for the first six months of this year was 3.13% and for the second half of the year was 7.42%. Difficulties around professional post recruitment have been raised with Members previously and remain a concern. However, we remain successful in filling posts, but it is not without issues.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) – TUPE

3. The Joint Waste Contract central client team have successfully transferred to Wealden District Council as of 31 March 2021 who are now the lead authority for the partnership.

Employment Relations

4. There has been one investigative hearing undertaken during the year. The outcome of the hearing was that the complaint was considered unfounded and no action was necessary.
5. We have introduced a Human Resources (HR) Liaison Group, made up of members of staff from each of the service areas, who meet regularly to discuss HR matters. These meetings have proven to be an effective way of communicating upcoming HR changes or projects and also in providing valuable feedback to the HR team on a range of topics from all areas.
6. An all staff survey was conducted in September 2020. The survey was developed by HR alongside independent body Valuentis. The survey asked a range of questions relating to staff satisfaction, engagement and our COVID-19 response. Results were anonymous and submitted to Valuentis directly,

who then collated this information for the Council. Whilst results were generally positive, the survey has provided insights, which will allow us to develop a targeted action plan for making any required improvements.

7. Members will be aware that most of the workforce have been working from home during the pandemic. In order to encourage communication, HR have introduced a monthly newsletter containing information about staff achievements and highlights from the past month, including celebrating staff achievements, both inside and outside of the workplace. This initiative has been well received by staff.

Employment Initiatives

8. Apprenticeships – We currently have six apprentices occupying various roles and service areas around the authority. We have been delighted with the success of this scheme and looking forward to continuing with this success. Since its introduction, six apprentices have successfully completed and three have secured employment with the Council.
9. We continue to invest our efforts into an HR and Payroll extension to the new Unit 4 finance system. The payroll section went live in July 2018 and we have continued the development work on the HR side, which should be live by the summer 2021.
10. The HR team and the Transformation team have developed an online annual leave solution for staff. Following testing, this has now gone live in one of the service areas and will be gradually rolled out across the whole workforce over the coming months. This will save a considerable amount of effort in maintaining the previous manual system.

Training

11. Due to the pandemic, in house training was put on hold, with training providers not initially set up for online delivery. However, online training has taken place through the iHASCO system on the topics of GDPR and Cyber Security. We are looking to expand this to a wider range of topics to allow staff to undertake their continuing professional development online. Trainers are now beginning to open up to more online courses and we have been utilising this form of training to good effect.
12. Sussex Training Consortium (STC) – STC has now completed the move from Rother to Arun District Council, who will now lead the service. During the pandemic they have not offered training courses, however as lockdown restrictions have eased, we have seen this pick up again and courses will become available to our staff.

Health and Safety

13. We had four minor staff accidents reported during this year. This is up one from the previous year. All have been investigated and no further action was found necessary.

14. We continue to provide refresher training for our first aiders as their qualifications expire. We also have a waiting list should anybody decide not to renew their qualification.
15. Mental Health - We have trained seven staff volunteers as Mental Health First Aiders to help support any staff dealing with poor mental health. Alongside this, HR have released supporting information to aid staff in identifying mental health issues and signposting where help can be found through outside agencies or via our Employee Assistance Programme. HR have also provided support and coaching to managers in identifying and dealing with mental health of their staff.

COVID–19 Pandemic

16. As referred to earlier, the impact of the pandemic has resulted in homeworking being made mandatory for the majority of staff for a significant period of time. Following easing of lockdowns, homeworking continues to remain in place and has proven effective in maintaining business operations during this challenging period for us all. The facilities team have continued to work from the Town Hall throughout the pandemic in order to maintain access to the building and ensure the security of our staff.
17. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions, risk assessments, guidelines and measures have been developed and put in place and in order to maintain the safety of staff entering our buildings and when carrying out their duties. We are looking at the opportunities for continued homeworking (in part or full) and the impact this would have on our accommodation needs. Consultation will be undertaken as appropriate with staff and unions before any decisions are taken.
18. With the move to homeworking, meetings are now conducted via Microsoft Teams which continues to be an effective way of holding meetings while we are not all able to attend the offices.
19. In the early stages of the pandemic, the HR team volunteered to assist with the community hub, also supporting other areas of the business when possible.

Temporary Restructure

20. A minor temporary restructure has been put in place as of 1 February 2021 in order to ease pressure on one of our larger service areas. This resulted in the creation of a new Head of Service role to lead Neighbourhood Services. This is to be reviewed during the upcoming corporate restructure project.

Policy

21. No new policies have been brought forward in this period. Our Pay Policy was updated in line with the pay award for 2020/21.
22. We are in the process of introducing “factsheets” to outline the key points along with a new online policy index to aid accessibility. HR are working with the Transformation team in order to develop a self-service platform to make

our policies more accessible to staff following the move from the RIBS platform to Microsoft Teams.

23. In June 2021, our policies are due to be independently reviewed by an outside body who will provide feedback and comments on any adjustments should they be required in order to ensure an up to date, robust policy framework remains in place.

Conclusion

24. The reports highlights that, in addition to dealing with the impact on staff of the pandemic, it has been possible to make significant progress in a number of areas to improve staff relations and management. The next year is likely to be busier than ever with adapting to the long term effects on how we work post pandemic. Maintaining open and constructive dialogue with staff will be essential to ensuring any changes are successful.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston		
Report Contact Officer:	Maria Benford – Human Resources Manager		
e-mail address:	Maria.benford@rother.gov.uk		
Appendices:	None		
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None		
Background Papers: Reference Documents:	None		