

## **EMPLOYMENT PANEL**

**TUESDAY 4 JANUARY 2011 AT 2.00PM**

PRESENT: Councillors Bloxham, Hendry (substitute for Councillor Glover), Mallinson J, Mitchelson, Stothard and Weber.

### **EMP.01/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There was an apology for absence from Councillor Glover.

### **EMP.02/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in respect of any of the items on the Agenda.

### **EMP.03/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2010 and 9 November 2010 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

### **EMP.04/11 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED - That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding the information) and exempt information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority, as defined in Paragraph Numbers 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

### **EMP.05/11 PRINCIPAL OFFICER LEASE CAR SCHEME**

The Assistant Director (Governance) presented report GD.71/10 which advised Members as to the procedural and practical requirements necessary to implement the decision of the Employment Panel to cease to operate the Principal Officer Car Lease Scheme taken at its meeting on 9 November 2010.

The Assistant Director (Governance) reminded Members of the background to the decision made on 9 November 2010 to cease to operate the scheme with effect from 1 December 2010 by giving the required six month notice period to terminate car

leases to the relevant officers. Members had further resolved that no compensation should be payable to those affected.

The Assistant Director (Governance) advised Members of the legal position surrounding that decision and that opinion had been sought from Counsel who concurred with the Assistant Director.

Therefore it was suggested that if Members were minded to cease to operate the scheme in the manner they determined on 9 November 2010, officers should be instructed to undertake the proper consultation process with a view to reaching agreement with both the unions and officers. The Assistant Director (Governance) stated that Members should make it clear what outcome they wished to achieve and ensure that that would be what staff would be consulted upon.

There was some confusion over the initial task given to the Deputy Chief Executive, but Members agreed that consultation had been carried out on one proposal and a different proposal agreed by the Employment Panel. Therefore the Assistant Director (Governance) recommended that the proposal agreed on 9 November 2010 be sent out to staff and the Trades Unions for consultation. The Personnel Manager advised that as there were less than 20 members of staff affected by the proposal only the minimum consultation period would be required unless the item needed to be linked to the issues surrounding the Essential Car User Scheme. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that it was possible to treat the two items separately.

RESOLVED – That staff and Trades Unions should be given a 30 days consultation period on the proposal agreed in November 2010.

## **EMP.06/11 REVIEW OF ESSENTIAL CAR USER ALLOWANCES**

The Assistant Director (Resources) presented report RD.67/10 that reviewed the Essential Car User Scheme and made recommendations to the eligibility criteria, review process and levels of protection that should be made available to staff losing the essential car user allowance under the revised criteria.

The Assistant Director (Resources) gave the background to the report and explained the criteria for the Essential Car User Scheme. The initial review of the Essential Car User Scheme had been considered by Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 3 November 2010 and it was recommended that a more detailed review should be undertaken.

The Assistant Director (Resources) outlined the revised approach and criteria for the Essential Car User Scheme and explained the various options available for consideration.

The Assistant Director (Resources) confirmed that there were currently 90 staff on the Essential Car User Scheme and if the Principal Officer Lease Car Scheme was removed there would be an additional 12 members of staff eligible for the Essential User Car Scheme.

The Assistant Director (Resources) advised that, depending on which option Members agreed to, there would be between 56 and 89 members of staff on the Essential User Car Scheme and confirmed the saving made.

A Member asked whether pool cars could be utilised more or whether hire cars could be used for short journeys. The Assistant Director (Resources) advised that the Council currently had 6 pool cars and they did a lot of mileage, but additional pool cars could be obtained to increase availability in that respect. He advised Members that under the review criteria staff doing the same job may qualify for an Essential Car User Allowance if other such staff qualified under the mileage criteria rate and that the mileage requirement for receiving an Essential Car User Allowance needed to be applied pro rata to hours worked for part time staff.

A Member proposed that the option regarding a comprehensive review of the use of pool cars be agreed. The proposal was seconded.

RESOLVED: 1.) That a comprehensive review of the use of pool cars be undertaken to determine the current utilisation of existing pool cars and whether additional pool cars would be required following any reduction in the Essential Car User Allowances recipients

2.) That current Essential Car User qualifiers would be consulted on the recommendations for future qualifying criteria as set out in the report

3.) That the results of the review be brought back to the Employment Panel for consideration in April 2011.

#### **EMP.07/11 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED - That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and which related to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding the information), as defined in Paragraph Numbers 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

#### **EMP.08/11 INTERIM STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Strategic Director presented a verbal report concerning the Council's staffing arrangements. The Assistant Director (Economic Development) had submitted a request to be re-deployed into the role of Planning Manager and as a consequence a vacancy had now arisen. The Strategic Director sought views and support from the Panel for two proposals. The first being that Members of the Panel recommend to Council that a recruitment process for a replacement Assistant Director be commenced, and secondly that whilst this process took place an interim director be appointed to ensure that the current work programmes were delivered.

A Member asked if there was justification for the post to be filled at all. In the current circumstances the Strategic Director believed it was essential that the post be filled and that an interim Assistant Director be appointed. Members expressed concern that there was insufficient information provided and that a fuller report should be considered by the Employment Panel to determine whether the post should be filled on a permanent basis.

The Strategic Director advised that there was an interim officer currently employed by the Council who would be qualified to fill the post until a final decision was made. He confirmed that other members of the senior management team did not have the capacity to take on the work of the Assistant Director in the interim period.

RESOLVED: 1.) The position as regards the vacation of the post of Assistant Director (Economic Development) by the current post holder be noted;

2.) Within six months a Report on capacity at the Assistant Director level of the Council's staffing structure be brought to Members of the Employment Panel with a recommendation as to whether the post of Assistant Director (Economic Development) should be permanently filled;

3.) In accordance with the Council's Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Jane Meek be appointed as Assistant Director (Economic Development) on an interim basis, subject to 4;

4.) The above interim appointment be for one of the following periods as appropriate:

- a) Until such time as the Council, following consideration of the Report requested in 2, determine that such a post is not required; or
- b) Until such time as a permanent Assistant Director (Economic Development) has been recruited in accordance with the Council's Chief Officer recruitment procedure.

(Meeting ended at 3.20pm)