

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

**PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE
29 APRIL 2009**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

UPDATE ON JOB EVALUATION PROJECT

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current Job Evaluation project.

2 Wards Affected

None.

3 Effect on Policy

3.1 None.

4 Contact Officers

4.1 Anne-Marie Scott, Head of Human Resources (extension 1731)

5 Background

5.1 The Council commenced job evaluation in September 2008, following a requirement under the 1997 Single Status Agreement and 2004 National Agreement to do so. With target dates of September 2009 for completion of the job evaluation project agreed and an implementation date of 1 April 2010, the project has been making good progress, and is currently on time and within budget.

Any pay and grading review, including job evaluation, requires the inclusion at all stages of local Unison. However final sign off can only be made by the National Unison office before implementation can take place. At present the process from time of sending the proposal to the National Office and reaching final agreement is taking approximately six months. Therefore in order to try and ensure the implementation date can be achieved, final proposals need to be ready by September 09 with job evaluation be completed by no later than July 09.

Once the project is completed and a new pay and grading structure agreed the Council will have an equality proofed pay and grading structure in place that will ensure the Council is able to mitigate the risk of equal pay claims. This is especially important at present as both 'no win, no fee' solicitors and regional Unison offices are encouraging staff and Unison members to lodge equal pay claims, although there is currently little evidence to support any such issues within Cherwell. Without completion of the project this cannot be ruled out completely. Completion of the project will also support any future organisational outsourcing or shared services negotiations on the basis that the Council will be able to clearly state there would be no equal pay issues, and therefore no claims for any new organisation to contend with.

The project is being run in accordance with Prince 2 principles and consists of a Project Team and Project Board. The job evaluation project team consists of a Project Manager (from HR), a Staff Liaison Coordinator (seconded from a Community Safety post until 31

March 2010), three job analysts (temporary until August 09), and a part time Admin Assistant (temporary until August 09).

The Project Board consists of Cllr Wood, Mary Harpley (project sponsor), John Hoad (Strategic Director PHE), Jo Smith (Communications Manager), Anne Marie Scott (Head of HR), Karen Curtin (Interim Head of Finance), Geoff Bell (Staff Liaison Coordinator), Paula Goodwin (Project Manager) and a Regional Unison representative (Liza Nicklin).

5.2 The Greater London Provincial Council JE Scheme and Process

The Council has selected the GLPC job evaluation scheme (Greater London Provincial Councils) following a selection process involving the local Unison Branch Executive and the staff consultation group. The decision was based on best fit to the posts Cherwell needs to evaluate along with an ease of understanding of the scheme.

As a result of the decision to use GLPC the Council has agreed a contract with Northgate Arinso to provide consultancy along with training for the project together with the purchase of evaluation software called EVALUATE.

The GLPC scheme is based on evaluation of 11 factors consisting of the following:

- 1. Supervision & Management of People**
- 2. Creativity & Innovation**
- 3. Contacts & Relationships**
- 4. Decisions – Discretion**
- 5. Decisions - Consequences**
- 6. Resources**
- 7. Work Demands**
- 8. Physical Demands**
- 9. Working Conditions**
- 10. Work Context**
- 11. Skills & Knowledge**

In order to be able to evaluate posts up to Head of Service level, the Project Board have agreed the following process. This meets the requirements of the scheme and also those of Unison.

- Staff Briefings
- Completion of job related questionnaire (JDQ), and update of person specification and job description.
- Agreed questionnaire, person spec and job description as signed off by postholder, line manager and Head of Service.
- Discussion with postholder (s), line manager and job analyst.
- Post evaluated using information provided, and the EVALUATE software.
- Post moderated (consistency checked by a panel of four project staff)
- Outcomes agreed and staff informed (when all posts evaluated and proposed pay and grading structure agreed – Sept 09 at earliest)
- Appeals process available.

5.3 Benchmarking

The first phase of job evaluation was to complete a benchmarking process. This process is used during job evaluation to ensure the chosen scheme is 'fit for purpose' and also is used to be able to improve the documentation to support the process. In order to

undertake benchmarking a cross section of posts were selected using agreed criteria.

These included:

Manual/Office Based Roles

Full/Part Time

Roles within Groupings

Career Graded

Male/Female Dominated Roles.

Senior/Management Roles

Heads of Service/Project Managers to find a ceiling for evaluation.

45 posts were selected across the Council with approximately two posts being selected in each service area. The benchmark phase was completed on the 28 February 2009 with a week of moderation (consistency checking) with the consultant from Northgate Arinso to ensure the scheme was working as expected.

There were no concerns about use of the GLPC scheme for job evaluation purposes within the Council at the benchmark phase end. The project now continues with evaluation of the remaining posts within the Council.

5.4 Job Evaluation of Remaining Posts

Job analysts are currently booking appointments with managers and postholders for discussions about posts to take place. These are nearly all booked in and will take place between April and July 09.

Consistency checks will take place every Thursday between April and July 09, consisting of four panel members made up of HR, staff consultation members and Unison representatives. A week of final checks will take place once all jobs have been evaluated.

5.5 Pay Modelling

As posts are evaluated the information provided will be used to undertake pay modeling to develop a draft pay and grading structure along with a review of any related pay policies that currently exist such as car allowances, overtime and weekend working rates and standby. Once proposals are approved by Project Board, local Unison will need to consult with their members in order to agree a recommendation that can go forward to the National and Regional Unison offices. Implementation would be difficult without such agreement, but it is hoped this can be achieved for the planned 1st April 2010 implementation date.

5.6 Appeals Policy

An Appeals Policy is currently being drafted to cover any appeals in relation to job evaluation. Once agreed it is likely that this process will not commence until staff have been informed of the outcomes of job evaluation and the proposals for the new pay and grading structures. It is hard to ascertain how many staff may appeal against the decisions relating to job evaluation although this is generally estimated at 40%. Any appeals process is likely to include those Unison representatives and HR staff who have not been involved in the evaluation process to date, and is likely to take between half a day and one day per appeal for all those included in the process.

5.7 **Equality Impact Assessments**

This will need to happen once job evaluation is completed, and will be undertaken by Northgate Arinso who estimate three days for completion. This is required before any final submission can be made to National Unison for signing off the scheme to ensure there are no equality issues that need to be addressed.

5.8 **Project Considerations**

5.8.1 **Organisational Capacity**

There are currently approximately 275 posts within the Council that require evaluation using the new GLPC scheme by the end of July 2009. Although evaluations will continue to take beyond this date as roles change and the organisation either redefines roles or creates new ones, and once the scheme is agreed by National Unison will be used in the future for all posts up to Head of Service level.

In order to complete the evaluation of these posts in the timescales prescribed there has to be differing levels of input from line managers and postholders in order to complete (JDQ's) questionnaires, to update person specs and job descriptions and to participate in job analyst discussions. The following is an estimate of time required to complete this process by those involved:

Collation of data by postholder(s) to complete (JDQ) questionnaire – 2 hours

Completion of (JDQ) questionnaire – 1 day

Review and checking of questionnaire by line manager – 1 to 2.5 hours

Job analyst discussions (includes postholder, job analyst, and line manager) – up to 1.5 hours

(Note: where there is more than one postholder in an identical posts no more than three staff are required to participate at a discussion, although all are asked to contribute to the completion of the posts questionnaire – one questionnaire per post.).

It is therefore estimated that each post requires approximately 2 days of input from managers and postholders to be able to evaluate the post fully. This has shown to be a true reflection of the input required as the Council has already evaluated 45 posts as a requirement of the process during the benchmark phase of the project. Those included in this part of the process were asked for feedback in order to be able to ascertain what staff input was required along with ways to improve the process.

5.8.2 **Unison**

In order to complete and implement job evaluation and a new pay and grading structure, the Council is required to work with local and regional Unison offices to ensure the process is being undertaken in a way that meets the requirements of equal pay and single status legislation and agreements. Geoff Bell, Staff Liaison Coordinator, is working as part of the Project Team 3 days per week as both the Unison and staff representative on the project but also as the link between the local branch of Unison and the Regional Officer, Liza Nicklin. The local Unison branch and the project team have therefore been working well together, however there is currently some friction with the Regional Unison office who have recently issued a letter to all Unison members of Councils within the South East area who have yet to complete and agree new pay and grading structures. This included Unison members working at Cherwell, who were encouraged to place equal pay claims now, even prior to the completion of the project, and without the support of the local

Unison branch.

It is also understood from the consultant at Northgate Arinso that getting agreement nationally by Unison for new pay and grading proposals along with the job evaluation scheme is very often problematic due to National and Regional Unison offices wishing to protect themselves from any potential claims made by their members for not protecting members rights adequately.

The project team will continue to work with local members to ensure all that can be done through consultation to reach an agreed outcome, however this may prove to be more problematic when required to reach final agreement with the National Unison office.

5.8.3 **Speed of Internet Connection and Security of Data**

In order to evaluate the posts to complete job evaluation the Council is using the Northgate Arinso GLPC EVALUATE software. The software is web based and therefore access is through the Council's internet connection. Due to the speed of the connection, and this can vary throughout the day, this has impacted on the speed of the evaluation process linked to the speed of the software through the connection. Evaluation should take approximately 1 hour using the system however this has regularly been seen to take over two hours. ICT are currently trying to find an alternative solution to ensure the project can be completed in the prescribed timescales, but it would appear there are limited options.

ICT are also looking at ways to ensure that job evaluation and pay modelling data remain secure and confidential to those members of the project team that require access. Should information either be lost or accessed by staff prior to the completion of the project this could be detrimental to the whole project.

5.8.4 **Accommodation**

Due to recent accommodation changes there are less available confidential rooms for staff and analysts to be able to discuss posts as well as private and quiet space to be able to complete questionnaires within work time. As the space is needed for dedicated short period of time (April to July 09) the job evaluation team have been using the large and small ICT rooms as well as a HR meeting room to ensure this accommodation is made available to be able to complete the project on time, but also to support staff through the process as best as possible. This does however mean that these rooms cannot be utilised for any other purpose until job evaluation is complete.

6 **Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contribution to Efficiency Savings**

6.1 The following details have been approved by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer, 01295 221566 and Karen Curtin, Interim Head of Finance, 01295 221551.

6.2 **Risk Assessment**

The risk associated with not completing the pay and grading review project is the potential for equal pay claims from staff and legal claims from other organisations as a result of TUPE transferred staff.

The risks to completion of the project include organisational capacity, which is already under pressure due to the financial situation and gaining agreement from the national Unison office. The project board are regularly apprised of the risks which may be escalated further during the final stages of the project.

6.3 **Financial Effects**

The financial effects of the process and implementation have been assessed and agreed separately by the Executive.

6.4 **Efficiency/Savings**

None.

7 Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to resolve to take note of the progress of the project and the issues that have been raised.