

Personnel Committee

Staff Liaison Coordinator

December 15, 2010

Report of the Head of People and Improvement

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To approve the extension of the current secondment to the post of Staff Liaison Coordinator.

This report is public

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- (1) To approve the extension of the current secondment to the post of Staff Liaison Coordinator.

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

In April 2007 the Council agreed to second a member of the Trade Union Executive to act as Staff Liaison Coordinator. This was to ensure capacity to deal with the significant changes that were planned.

The Union nominated Geoff Bell who was seconded to the role in May 2007 from his substantive post of Safer Communities Officer. The secondment was subsequently extended as the role became staff side lead for job evaluation and latterly on phase 3 of the pay project and lead for staff consultation and negotiation generally.

Having a dedicated resource in this area has proved invaluable, as demonstrated by the significant amount of change that has been achieved without challenge and the improved ratings of CDC as an employer as demonstrated through the MORI survey. The committee are therefore recommended to extend the secondment by a further 12 months.

The job description has been slightly amended to reflect current priorities and is attached at appendix 1.

The current secondment agreement is due to end in March 2011. The total (gross) cost of the secondment is £23,400 per year. For the last 2 years (until March 2011) this cost has been met from the job evaluation project budget. The cost can be met for a further year by utilising savings from another part of the People and Improvement budget.

Proposals

- 1.1 Extend the secondment arrangements for a further 12 months.
- 1.2 Agree the revised job description attached at appendix 1.

Conclusion

- 1.3 As the Council enters a time of unprecedented change it is critical that capacity is available to support effective communication and involvement.
- 1.4 The Council will potentially need to make some very difficult decisions around service cuts and redundancy over the next 12 months. Supporting this post will demonstrate our commitment consultation and support for those affected.
- 1.5 The extension of this seconded role will lead to more effective change management, reduce the risk of future challenge and promote positive employee relations.

Background Information

- 2.1 Staff engagement is fundamental in the effective management of people, most critically at times of significant change.
- 2.2 The MORI staff satisfaction survey provided clear evidence that the Council's approach to communication and consultation has improved dramatically over the last 2 years.
- 2.3 The role of Staff Liaison Coordinator is integral to effective consultation, negotiation and involvement.
- 2.4 The role extends to provide support and engagement with all staff, not just those who are members of the trade union.

- 2.5 The post is based in People and Improvement, facilitating close partnership working with the HR and communications teams.
- 2.6 The Council is entering a time of unprecedented change with the effects of the comprehensive spending review and the partnership working with South Northamptonshire requiring staff involvement.
- 2.7 Removing the role now would be perceived as an detrimental to staff involvement and would make our change management processes less effective.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 Employee relations are effective within the Council and this post is critical to maintaining that position.
- 3.2 Given the extent of change the Council is facing it would be unwise to withdraw the resource at this time.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- Option One** Agree to the extension of the secondment
- Option Two** Decline the extension of the secondment
- Option Three** Offer an alternative agreement to provide capacity for consultation and involvement

Implications

Financial: The current secondment agreement is due to end in March 2011. The total (gross) cost of the secondment is £23,400 per year. For the last 2 years (until March 2011) this cost has been met from the job evaluation project budget. The cost can be met for a further year by utilising savings from another part of the People and Improvement budget.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance 01295 221551

Legal: Effective consultation and negotiation processes help to protect the Council from risk of successful challenge and this is particularly relevant during times of significant change.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of legal,
01295 221686

Risk Management: The risks associated with not agreeing this request is that the Council is less able to support effective change and therefore at greater risk of challenge.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, 01295
221566

Wards Affected

None

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Job description and Person Specification
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Anne-Marie Scott, Head of People and Improvement
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JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title: Staff Liaison Co-ordinator

POST NO: secondment

Department :	Human Resources		
Responsible to:	Head of People and Improvement (Unison Branch Secretary) [12 month secondment]	Post No:	PE01
Responsible for:	n/a	Post No:	

Key Objectives:	
1	To aid the development and maintenance of positive and proactive employee relations across the organisation.
2	To provide a link between management and Staff Side, ensuring effective routes for communication are established and maintained.
2	Assist with the running of employee forums to ensure effective consultation, facilitate feedback and promote involvement.
4	To develop the appropriate levels of skills and expertise among staff representatives to allow positive and effective employee relations across the organisation.
5	To take the employee side link on corporate change projects, ensuring effective representation, consultation and negotiation on behalf of staff.

Responsibilities:	
1	To establish and maintain communication channels with employee representatives and employees generally.
2	To provide regular feedback management, staff and Members on employee relations issues.
3	To participate in formal consultation and negotiation, ensuring effective communication at all times.
4	To provide advice and support to all employees on individual and collective employment matters.
5	To provide support for organisational change including participation in consultation, individual and staff meetings and implementation of changes.
6	To lead from the Employee Side on the development of new and revised policies and changes to terms and conditions including relevant consultation, negotiation and ballot arrangements as required.

7	To research, source and facilitate training for employee representatives in employee relations issues to include consultation and negotiation, dispute resolution and job evaluation.
8	To attend relevant organisational and Unison meetings and committees, and present verbal and written reports as required.
9	To develop links with partner and network organisations to establish and disseminate information and good practice.
10	To liaise with regional and national union officials as required to facilitate the effective management of the local branch.
11	To develop a partnership approach between staff and management and encourage a culture of challenge and feedback.
12	To contribute to Human Resources strategy and policy development and consultation.
13	To participate in formal negotiation of collective agreements.
14	To work with Unison staff from the regional office and other agencies to gain the necessary skills to carry out the roles required within this JD
15	Any other duties consistent with the grade and role.
This Job Description was created/revised on	
December 2010	by
Anne-Marie Scott	

Candidates will be short-listed on the basis of illustrating in their application that they fulfil the following criteria. Examples that demonstrate the ability to fulfil criteria should be included. This applies to all candidates.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

SPECIFICATION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Relevant Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 years experience in an employee relations role. • Experience of working within a team involved in a range of human resources issues. • Experience of taking a lead role in consultation and negotiation of employment policy and practice. • Experience in participating in project teams and boards. • Experience of working with regional and national trade unions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of target setting and performance monitoring. • Experience of working within local government. • Experience of job evaluation systems.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of development and delivering presentation and workshops. • Experience of operating as an 'internal consultant' in assisting line managers and employees with employment issues. • Experience of presenting reports to meetings/committees. • Experience of trade union negotiation/consultation. • Experience of working towards the Investors in People standard. 	
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised management qualification • Recognised Presentation skills qualification 	
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continuing professional development. • Willingness and commitment to expand areas of knowledge. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of performance management. • A good understanding of employment law and collective bargaining. 	