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Jeff Hughes
*Head of Democratic and Legal
Support Services*

MEETING : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
VENUE : ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : TUESDAY 24 MAY 2011
TIME : 3.00 PM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

To be confirmed at Annual Council on 18 May 2011.

(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)

**CONTACT OFFICER: LORRAINE
BLACKBURN (01279) 502172**

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PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

1. A Member with a personal interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered must, with certain specified exemptions (see section 5 below), disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest prior to the commencement of it being considered or when the interest becomes apparent.
2. Members should decide whether or not they have a personal interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting. If a Member decides they have a personal interest then they must also consider whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.
3. A personal interest is either an interest, as prescribed, that you must register under relevant regulations or it is an interest that is not registrable but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of the Council more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward(s) affected by the decision.
4. Members with personal interests, having declared the nature of that personal interest, can remain in the meeting, speak and vote on the matter unless the personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.
5. An exemption to declaring a personal interest applies when the interest arises solely from a Member's membership of or position of general control or management on:
 - any other body to which they have been appointed or nominated by the authority
 - any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g another local authority)

In these exceptional cases, provided a Member does not have a prejudicial interest, they only need to declare their interest if they speak. If a Member does not want to speak to the meeting, they may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

6. A personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if all of the following conditions are met:
 - the matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions
 - the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter
 - a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

7. Exempt categories of decisions are:
 - setting council tax
 - any ceremonial honour given to Members
 - an allowance, payment or indemnity for Members
 - statutory sick pay
 - school meals or school transport and travelling expenses: if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full-time education or you are a parent governor, unless it relates particularly to the school your child attends
 - housing; if you hold a tenancy or lease with the Council, as long as the matter does not relate to your particular tenancy or lease.

8. If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that interest and its nature as soon as the interest becomes apparent to you.

9. If you have declared a personal and prejudicial interest, you must leave the room, unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished or when the meeting decides that you have finished (if that is earlier). You cannot remain in the public gallery to observe proceedings.

AGENDA

1. Apologies

To received apologies for absence.

2. Chairman's Announcements

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10).

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2011.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest and Party Whip arrangements.

5. Probation Policy (Pages 11 - 26).

6. Secondment Policy (Pages 27 - 44).

7. Human Resources Quarterly Performance Report - May 2011
(Pages 45 - 52).

8. Local Joint Panel - Minutes of the meetings held on 19 January 2011 and 15 March 2011 (Pages 53 - 64).

9. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY 2011,
AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Woodward (in the Chair).
Councillors J O Ranger, S Rutland-Barsby
and M Wood.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Graham Mully	- Risk Assurance Officer

479 APOLOGIES AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Mayes, D A A Peek and N Wilson.

In the absence of the Chairman it was moved by Councillor M Wood and seconded by Councillor J O Ranger that Councillor C Woodward be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor C Woodward be appointment Chairman for the meeting.

480 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 13 October 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

481 DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE - IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of People and Organisational Services submitted a report outlining the up and coming changes to East Herts policies and procedures following a decision to remove East Herts Council's retirement age arising from changes by the Government.

It was noted that the removal of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) would begin in April 2011 with transitional arrangements covering the period until 1 October 2011. East Herts Council's retirement age would cease on 6 April 2011. The transitional arrangements were explained. The changes to the retirement age would also necessitate changes to the Council's policies and procedures. The timeline for effecting the changes was set out in the report now submitted including the implications of the Council's Group life insurance and personal accident cover.

In response to a query from Councillor J O Ranger regarding the pension scheme and whether an individual could still contribute at 65 years of age, the Director of Internal Services confirmed that the individual could still contribute beyond 65 and that it was up to the individual.

Members noted the programme for the repeal of the default retirement age.

RESOLVED – that the Council's programme for the repeal of the default retirement age be noted.

482 CAUTIONARY PERSONS' REGISTER

The Executive Member for Resources and Internal Support

submitted a report concerning the establishment of a new Cautionary Persons' Register in order to fulfil the Council's duty of care to staff to protect them where an employee could be exposed to aggressive behaviour from a person or an animal. It was noted that the old policy had been based on "hearsay" and was considered unlawful. The register would be reviewed annually and was last reviewed on 21 December 2010. UNISON was happy with the new register.

In response to a query from Councillor J O Ranger concerning the term "partners" the Risk Assurance Officer explained the definition and that the sharing of information with partners needed to be relevant. It was suggested that the use of "partner organisations" offered more clarity to the definition and that this term should be used in the register. This was supported.

Councillor S Rutland-Barsby raised the possibility of refuse collectors being at risk from an animal and whether the collector could ask for a dog to be included on the register. The Risk Assurance Officer stated that the Courts' view was that this information could not be shared as this would be considered "hearsay". If there was clear evidence which could be used such as a court conviction then this information could be used.

In response to a query from Councillor M Wood regarding whether parking enforcement officers would be covered, the Risk Assurance officer explained that the Contractor had a duty of care to its employees and that the Council had a duty to ensure that the Contractor was managing its staffs' welfare.

Members agreed to the adoption of the new policy and that the definition "partner organisations" be used within the register.

RESOLVED – that the new policy be agreed and adopted as amended.

483 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS -
APRIL 2010 - NOVEMBER 2010

The Head of People and Organisational Services submitted a report detailing the turnover and sickness absence statistics for the period April to November 2010. Updates were also provided in relation to training and development and performance management.

The Committee was advised that the current turnover rate for the Council was 6.04% against a target of 12%. The current voluntary leaver's rate was 4.39% against a target of 8%. It was noted that there were 22 leavers to date. Short term sickness was 2.85 days per FTE against a target of 5 days and that the above average long term sickness was 1.19 days against a target of 2.5 days.

In response to a query from Councillor M Wood regarding an upsurge in short absences, the Head of People and Organisational Services confirmed that these figures did not take account of staff affected by winter flu.

The Head of People and Organisational Services advised that the outturn for corporate induction was currently 40% with fifteen new staff starting this year. Of those staff, six had been on an induction course. Councillor C Woodward expressed concern about the induction levels and the role to be played by the Head of Service. The Head of People and Organisation Services undertook to report back on this issue at the next meeting.

Updates were provided in relation to the Council's Performance and Development Review (PDR) scheme with Revenues and Benefits achieving an outturn of 95.74%. The outturn for the mid year review 2010/11 was 64.99% overall against a target of 100%. Human Resources continued to push to improve on the overall target but it was recognised that it was the efforts of the Head of Revenues and Benefits that had achieved such good results. It was suggested that such successes needed to be included in Team Update and people thanked for their efforts. It was noted that a letter had already been forwarded to the Head of Service for her efforts.

It was noted that to date, 31.01% had received corporate training. The target for 2010/11 was 85.44%.

In response to a query from Councillor J O Ranger concerning redundancies in relation the number of leavers, the Head of People and Organisational Services confirmed that there had been two.

In response to a query from Councillor C Woodward concerning vacancies and the sharing of services, the Head of People and Organisational Services explained that the Council used Manpower and that staff would have to apply for a role as an external applicant. The Council's vacancy lists were not shared externally. She further confirmed that the Council was still actively recruiting.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that before vacancies could be advertised they had to first be approved by Corporate Management Team. The preference was to move staff around internally. Fixed term contracts were offered to new recruits. In response to a query from Councillor J O Ranger about deleting posts, the Director confirmed that some posts affected by organisational change could be deleted and that 25 FTE posts might be affected over the next five years.

In response to a query concerning the training budget, the Head of People and Organisational Services confirmed that this was sufficient and that there had been a focus on engagement and behaviour and values which had been given via staff briefings.

Councillor J O Ranger stated that staff within the new organisation would need a lot more training once matters had settled down and would not wish to see the training budget cut. The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there was nothing in the Medium Term Financial Plan to cut the budget. The Head of People and Organisational Services confirmed that there would be a focus on up-skilling and looking at the skills staff currently had and the roles they played.

In response to a query from Councillor C Woodward regarding an evaluation of the FISH training, the Head of People and Organisational Services confirmed that she would respond to the Member by email.

Members considered the benefits to the Council of using apprenticeships and the role of the Government in this process.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Chairman
Date

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 24 MAY 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

5. PROBATIONARY POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *None*

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To approve the Probationary Policy.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:</u> that	
(A)	The Probationary Policy be approved.

1.0 Background

1.1 The current contract of employment states that new members of staff are subject to a 6 months probationary period, unless they have previous local government service.

1.2 New staff with previous local government service are not required to complete a probationary period.

2.0 Report

2.1 A review of the probation process was completed in November 2010 to establish how effective the probation period was and how it was used by managers. The investigation found that different services and different managers used varying practices in regard to the probationary period. Some managers were aware of issues and were not raising them until the end of the probationary period. Other managers felt there wasn't enough support for dealing with new employees with continuous local government service.

2.2 Comparisons were made with other local Councils and it was found that some Council's had introduced a probation period for all new staff, irrespective of whether they had local government service. This had ensured that if any issues occurred during the

first six months of employment with the Council they could be dealt with effectively.

- 2.3 A new Probation Policy has been developed (Essential Reference Papers B and C) to introduce a six month/three Month probation period for all new staff and staff on secondment and to give clear guidelines to managers and staff on the probation process.

The benefits to both the Council and the employee include:

- Uniform understanding of the probationary policy across the Council
- Clear guidance for managers and staff on the processes and expectations during the probationary period.
- Clear framework for managers and staff to deal with any issues that arise, even if the employee has previous local government experience.
- Supporting the Council's PDR process.

- 2.3 Successful probationary periods depend on clear criteria, robust assessment of service needs and good communication between managers and employees. The policy addresses these issues and aims to ensure continuity throughout the Council.

- 2.4 The policy has been devised and has been sent to SMG and UNISON for their comments. All the feedback and comments received have been taken into consideration and relevant amendments made.

- 2.5 The policy originally went to LJP on the 15th March 2011. In conjunction with UNISON minor amendments were made to the policy, which were agreed at the HR/UNISON meeting on the 21st April 2011.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers:

None

Contact Member: Portfolio holder for Human Resources Matters.

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman – Head of Human Resources, Extn:
1635.

Report Author: Helen Farrell – Human Resources Officer. Extn:
1633.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives (<i>delete as appropriate</i>):	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with Unison and SMG. Once approved, the revised policy will go to Local Joint Panel and HR Committee.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report.
Risk Management:	None



East Herts Council

Probationary Policy

Policy Statement

**Policy Statement No 41 (Issue No 1)
April 2011**

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PROBATIONARY POLICY

Policy Statement No 41 (Issue No 1) April 2011

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the probationary procedure for all employees commencing employment at East Herts Council including those with previous local government service.
- 1.2 The policy includes employees who are employed on a temporary, fixed term contracts, secondments (with or without continuous local government service).
- 1.3 An employee's performance, attendance and conduct will be monitored throughout the probationary period to ensure that the employee meets the required standards. The Line Manager will ensure that the member of staff is properly supported and trained to enable them to become an effective member of the team.
- 1.4 New employees will be subject to a 6 months probationary period. The probationary period would be reduced to 3 months for a secondment or fixed term contract.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Council employees except for Chief Officer level and above, where it should be used in conjunction with procedures set out in the Constitution.
- 2.2 All new members of staff are subject to a probationary period and should follow the review process as a good practice guide.
- 2.3 If a member of staff changes role during their employment with East Herts Council any issues arising from the probationary reviews must be dealt with through the councils other policies for example managing performance, absence management or disciplinary at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.4 The probationary period may be extended in exceptional circumstance.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 Managers should assess the employee's capabilities, reliability and suitability for the role.
- 3.2 Employees should work to their set objectives, attend work as contracted to do so and ensure their personal conduct is acceptable at all times.
- 3.3 Appropriate training will be available to the employee, including corporate induction if new to the Council.
- 3.4 Open communication between managers and employee.
- 3.5 Human Resources will provide advice and support to managers when dealing with probation issues.
- 3.6 Employees will be able to contact Human Resources for advice.

4.0 Review Timeline

- 4.1 The initial review meeting will be held in the first week between the manager and the employee. Then regular working 1-2-1 meetings should be diarised.
- 4.2 The manager will then hold review meetings at 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 20 weeks. The outcome of these reviews should be recorded on the appropriate progress review form and sent to HR. Appendix A.
- 4.3 If the contract is a secondment or a fix term contract with review meetings would be a 3 weeks, 6 weeks and 10 weeks and recorded on the appropriate progress review form.
- 4.4 For the probationary period to be effective, it must have the active and positive involvement of both the manager and employee. This will allow any areas of concern to be raised and appropriate action to be taken before the end of the probationary period.

5.0 Initial Review Meeting

5.1 This meeting will be arranged in the employee's first week of employment as part of their induction. The purpose of this meeting is to set out the employees objectives, complete the induction check list and discuss the priorities of the Service and Council. In line with the Councils Performance Development Review Scheme the objectives must be sent to HR once finalised.

6.0 Regular Review Meetings

6.1 It is recommended that these meetings are booked in advance and should be held at 6, 12 and 20 weeks.

6.2 The manager should use the standard progress review form for each meeting and send the completed form to Human Resources signed by both the manager and employee.

6.3 At the review meeting the manager should consider the progress the employee has made and check the employee's performance against the set objectives. Attendance and personal conduct should also be discussed.

6.4 The employee should demonstrate they have been capable of undertaking the full range of their set duties and objectives.

6.5 Any issues identified by either party should be discussed at the review meetings. Human Resources should be informed if the probation is not going well and provide support if required.

7.0 Completion of Satisfactory Probation

7.1 Human Resources write to the manager one month before the probation period is due to end. If the employee has satisfactorily completed the probation period the manager should sign off the probation at this point and Human Resources will write to the employee confirming their employment.

8.0 Unsatisfactory Probation - First Formal Review Meeting

8.1 The first formal meeting will only be required if the performance is deemed as unsatisfactory and would be in addition to the set review meetings. If the employee has continuous local government service; the appropriate council policy should be implemented at this stage.

8.2 If the manager has identified that there are issues relating to the employee's performance, attendance or conduct these issues should

be discussed with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity and a First Formal Review Meeting should be arranged.

- 8.3 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. A reason for the meeting must be given, an outline of the issue. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting.
- 8.4 The formal review meeting will consider:
- The performance, conduct/behaviour or absence that is below the standard required.
 - Details of management action taken to assist and support the employee to reach the required standards, including any identified training.
 - The employee's response/explanation to all issues raised by the manager.
- 8.5 If the outcome of the meeting finds that the employee is working at a satisfactory level the manager should inform the employee no further action will be taken. This will be confirmed in writing within 5 days and a copy will be placed on the employee's personal file.
- 8.6 If the meeting finds the employee is not working to a satisfactory level the manager will issue a written warning within 5 days of the meeting which will include a clear set of targets for the employee to work to within a given time frame and details of the training and support that was discussed. The improvement targets should be concise and clear and giving the member of staff a realistic time scale to show improvement e.g. 1 month. The probationary period may have to be reviewed at this point to enable the employee to improve within the target deadlines set. A copy of the outcome will be placed on the employee's personal file. The written warning will be kept on the employee's file for six months.
- 9.0 Second Formal Review Meeting – Unsatisfactory Probation**

- 9.1 In the event that the employee's performance has not improved within the set time period agreed a Second Formal Review Meeting should be held and chaired by the Head of Service.
- 9.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting, which would be chaired by the Head of Service.
- 9.3 The manager should summarise to the Head of Service the position to date including details of any action taken to assist the employee to achieve their objectives and the employee should then comment on their progress since the last meeting.
- 9.4 The Head of Service should then decide if the employee has reached the required level of performance expected for their role and set objectives.
- 9.5 If it is deemed that the employee is working at the expected level, the Head of Service should send a letter within 5 working days to confirm they have now reached a satisfactory level and the written warning will remain on their personal file for 6 months.
- 9.6 If the employee is still not working at the expected level or performance diminishes the Head of Service should write to the employee within 5 working days issuing a final written warning with a clear set of targets for the employee to work to within a given time frame for improvement including any training or support discussed. The employee should also be informed that if their performance does not improve they will be dismissed from the Council.
- 9.7 Human Resources will continue to support the manager and employee and additional training and support should be investigated and implemented as appropriate.

10.0 Final Review Meeting

- 10.1 If the employee's performance does not improve within the agreed timeframe a final review meeting will be arranged, chaired by the Director.
- 10.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The

employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting, which would be chaired by the Director.

- 10.3 The manager should summarise the position and explain the actions taken to support the employee in achieving their objectives. The employee should then comment on their progression.
- 10.4 The Director should decide if the employee has been able to achieve the objectives set for their post and their performance meets the required level.
- 10.5 If it is deemed that the employee has reached a satisfactory level, the Director will write to the employee to confirm they have achieved the expected level and the final warning will be remain on their personal file for 12 months.
- 10.6 If the employee hasn't reached the appropriate level of performance to meet their set objectives. The Director will dismiss the employee from the council after consultation with the Head of Human Resources. The employee will be given their contractual notice period. This will be confirmed in writing.

11.0 Extension to Probationary Period

- 11.1 Only in exceptional circumstances will the probationary period be extended, good practice would state that the probationary period should only be extended up to a maximum of 12 weeks. The extension should reflect the appropriate training need or timeframe of the targets set at the formal review.
- 11.2 Extensions should only be for the purpose of dealing with performance issues, e.g. extended form training purposes.
- 11.3 Managers will seek advice from Human Resources prior to extending the probationary period

12.0 Appeal

- 12.1 All employees have the right to appeal against any formal action of this procedure in accordance with the Council's Appeals Policy.

13.0 Policy Review and Amendment

- 13.1 This Policy shall be reviewed after two years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.

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PROBATIONARY POLICY – ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER C

Probationary Review Meeting

Name:		Post Title::		
Directorate: Service:		Start Date: End Date:		
Review Period: 6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Final review 20 weeks <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
Ability to work without supervision				
Reliability/Timekeeping				
Relations with other work colleagues				
Attendance records				
Key Objectives for the post. Managers to set SMART objectives to be achieved during probationary period				
1.	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
Any areas that need development before next review:				
Record of good practice/performance delivered:				
Agreed by Employee: -----Agreed by Manager: -----				
To be completed for final review only				
I confirm that the above person has successfully completed their probationary period. HR please send a letter confirming them in their post				
Manager signature: ----- Date: -----				

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EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 24 MAY 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

6. SECONDMENT POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *None*

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To approve the Secondment Policy.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:</u> that	
(A)	The amendments to the Secondment Policy be approved.

1.0 Background

1.1 The secondment policy was last updated in 2008.

2.0 Report

2.1 A review of the secondment process was completed in November 2010 to establish the effectiveness of the current policy.

2.2 The investigation found that due to the increase in secondments the policy needed to be updated to make it fit for purpose,

2.3 Issues that arose included:

- The length of time a member of staff could have between each secondment opportunity.
- A reduction of paperwork.
- Signing off of annual leave
- A process for dealing with performance issues.

2.3 Successful secondment depends on clear criteria, and agreement between the managers and employees involved.

2.4 The policy has been amended, essential reference paper B.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers:

Collective agreement – Essential Reference Paper B.

Contact Member: Portfolio holder for Human Resources Matters.

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman – Head of Human Resources, Extn: 1635.

Report Author: Helen Farrell – Human Resources Officer, Extn: 1633.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives (<i>delete as appropriate</i>):	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with Unison and SMG. The revised policy has gone to Local Joint Panel.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report.
Risk Management:	None

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East Herts Council

Secondment

Policy Statement

Policy Statement No 19 (Issue No 1)

May 2011

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1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Council's Secondment Policy has been established to demonstrate our commitment to the development of all of our employees, both for their current roles and for the changes and challenges of the future, both individually and organisationally. Secondments can be advantageous to the employer and the employee. This policy provides the framework within which secondments will operate at East Herts Council.
- 1.2 The Secondment scheme will work in conjunction with other learning and development initiatives within the Council to offer internal and/or external opportunities for individuals to take up different posts for a specific period of time in order to provide temporary cover, i.e for maternity leave in another service.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the principles of being a recognised Investor in People and seeks to consistently improve the development standards and opportunities for all employees in line with these principles.

2.0 What is a Secondment?

- 2.1 Secondment is defined as the temporary transfer of an employee to another part of the same organisation or to a different organisation for a set period of time, which is agreed between both parties. Various secondment options need to be considered, i.e part time, job share cover, whilst considering the needs of the service.
- 2.2 A Secondment must be viewed flexibly, such as no barriers to a part time secondment (less than 37 hours), which could be either as part of a full time substantive post, or a part time secondment in its own right. The main criteria being that it meets the learning needs and circumstances of the employee as well as those of the Council.

3.0 Secondment versus Acting Up

- 3.1 Generally both arrangements offer manager's the flexibility to make short term changes to their team either to cover a vacancy before a post is advertised permanently or to cover the absence

of the post holder e.g. sickness, maternity, secondment or sabbatical (see also 4.3 below).

- 3.2 Staff have the opportunity to experience new areas of work; develop their skills and abilities and usually, depending on why they are accepting such an arrangement, to earn more for a limited period.
- 3.3 The length of such arrangements may vary but would be unlikely to last for more than 1 Year.

3.4 **What is a Secondment?**

- 3.4.1 A secondment (at any level) is a move to a post *outside* the section/team/service area of the secondee's substantive post.
- 3.4.2 Secondments must be advertised at the evaluated rate for the job and offered at in the same way as a permanent or fixed term appointment.
- 3.4.3 Applications are acceptable from permanent and fixed term staff from within or outside the section/team/service area.

3.5 **What is Acting Up?**

- 3.5.1 Acting up is an arrangement where an employee temporarily covers part or all of a more senior post *within* his/her section /team/service area for a limited period.
- 3.5.2 Remuneration for Acting Up will depend upon what proportion of the post is being covered. Details on how to calculate this are set up in the Collective Agreement – Undertaking additional duties February 11.
- 3.5.3 Managers cannot use the arrangement as a mechanism to avoid paying someone the rate for the job so if it is used to back fill a post, for example a secondment, then the arrangement must be time limited to a year after which it should be reviewed on a three monthly basis to ensure it is equitable for all parties: secondee; employee acting up and manager.

4.0 **Principles**

- 4.1 Secondment opportunities will be available to all permanent employees who meet the eligibility criteria, in line with the organisation's commitment to Diversity and Equalities Policy.
- 4.2 Secondment opportunities should be considered when vacancies arise. If the vacancy is considered appropriate as a secondment opportunity then it will be advertised to all employees via email and on the intranet. Managers should circulate details to all staff without internet access.
- 4.3 Temporary and specific project vacancies may also be best filled through a secondment opportunity.
- 4.4 The substantive manager of anyone wishing to apply for a secondment must have given approval to the member of staff concerned by signing the internal recruitment application being submitted.
- 4.5 Secondments are to be encouraged and therefore the onus will be on the secondee's line Manager to provide an objective business case as to why an employee should not be permitted the opportunity of a secondment. Generally, a minimum of six months between each secondment opportunity would apply but that exceptions may be agreed by the substantive Manager in order to ensure continuity of service.
- 4.6 If the employee considers that they have unreasonably been denied an opportunity, they should speak to their Head of Service.
- 4.7 Secondments will normally be for a period of between 3 months and a year depending on circumstances. The time frame will be agreed and clearly defined in the secondment agreement. Any extension to the time frames must be discussed and agreed by both managers involved and Human Resources before the position is advertised.
- 4.8 The substantive manager can expect 4 weeks notice prior to the secondee taking up the secondment.
- 4.9 All seconded staff will remain under the contract of employment with East Herts Council, retaining the majority of their substantive terms and conditions (except where the post to which they are seconded has a higher rate of pay and holiday entitlement); this may not include all special allowances unless relevant for the job such as, standby or other additional allowances. Continuity of employment will be protected and annual leave entitlement (where appropriate) will be adjusted accordingly for the duration of the secondment.

- 4.10 All annual leave taken during the secondment period should be signed off by the secondment manager and annual leave applied for outside of the secondment period should be signed off by the substantive manager.
- 4.11 PDR arrangements and development plans will be agreed with the host manager completing the PDR documentation from East Herts Council and ensuring all the relevant documentation and records are signed.

5.0 Types of Secondments

5.1 Internal Secondment

- 5.1.1 Within the Council a secondment will constitute one of the following:

5.1.1.1 Project work

5.1.1.1.1 A secondment is useful in resourcing short term projects, particularly specific projects with an expected duration of 3-12 months as this allows an individual to gain new skills and experiences whilst delivering an outcome on a project for the Council. Secondments are seen as a career development opportunity and for this reason will initially be advertised internally only at first. Should the internal recruitment not produce a suitable candidate. East Herts Council will look to other similar organisations to fill this role.

5.1.1.2 Temporary cover

5.1.1.2.1 A specific vacancy that exists on a temporary basis, such as maternity cover which would allow someone to move to a new role and develop skills and experience over a set period of time. These opportunities should be advertised internally and if not filled then offered through the normal Recruitment Guide and procedures that exist within the Council.

5.2 External Secondment

5.2.1 An external secondment could constitute a secondment within another Local Government organisation (e.g. County Council, Police and Health authorities) or to other not for profit organisations or private companies.

5.2.2 For all the parties involved, i.e. the host organisation, the employee and the seconding employer, the exposure to different work practices can be beneficial to all. However, it is essential that all three parties are clear about their obligations, responsibilities, expectations, accountabilities and performance objectives in this situation.

5.2.3 Legal Services must be involved in agreeing Secondment Agreement and advice should also be sought from Human Resources prior to formalising arrangements.

5.2.4 HR will confirm all secondments in writing to the employee, including written confirmation that where external terms are less favourable, the terms and conditions in the substantive contract will apply, for example sickness and holiday entitlement.

5.2.5 The Accountancy team will also need to be informed to ensure that appropriate recharging is established.

6.0 Benefits of Secondments

6.1 Advantages are to be gained by both the Council and the employee.

6.2 For the Council:

- a) Assists in improving employee motivation
- b) To cover long term sick leave, maternity leave etc
- c) Provides a viable temporary alternative to advertising and recruitment of new employees

- d) Improves working relationships across services/specialisms and with outside partnership agencies
- e) Assists in furthering organisational and personal objectives
- f) Encourages employee development
- g) Develops a multi-skilled workforce
- h) Provides a cost effective way of developing employees
- i) Demonstrates a commitment to developing all employees by actively promoting and supporting the policy
- j) Ultimately it could be of benefit to our customers
- k) Aids retention of staff, as they see development opportunities. This can be cost saving for the Council as replacing staff when they leave costs money (recent estimates have shown that the cost of losing an experienced employee can be equivalent to approximately one years salary).

6.3 For the Employee:

- a) Enables employees to develop and broaden their skills, knowledge and competencies
- b) Increases motivation
- c) Broadens knowledge/awareness of the District Council
- d) Develops skills and knowledge with 'on the job' work experience
- e) May assist in enabling career progression
- f) May provide a temporary alternative to redundancy

7.0 Recruitment Process and Responsibilities

7.1 Generally

- a) The host department will usually reimburse additional expenses incurred by the substantive manager as a result of the secondment.

- b) Advice must be obtained from Finance on suitable mechanisms for recouping the pay of East Herts employees going to an external secondment or reimbursing external organisations for their employees from coming to East Herts on secondment. This will be arranged on a case by case basis depending on the length of the secondment and any other relevant factors.

7.2 Managers Responsibilities

- a) The host manager must ensure that HR is consulted on all potential secondment cases.
- b) The host manager must ensure that the vacancy procedure has been followed and the available post has the funding and authorisation to be recruited to.
- c) The host manager must ensure that the selection methods in the Recruitment Guide and procedures are adhered to.
- d) Host managers must provide an appropriate induction for the secondee and perform regular reviews as set out in the probationary policy, as well as maintaining the appraisal process with the secondee.
- e) Substantive managers considering a request from an individual seeking to be released to take up a secondment post must consider the costs of back filling the position; the resources available; the impact on the team, and objectives to be achieved. Where the budget holder for the secondee's substantive position faces the penalty of finding additional budget to cover the cost of recruiting to this position, a transfer of budget between the services might be required to offset this.
- f) If the substantive manager has any concerns that allowing a secondment will jeopardise their service provision, this must be resolved before the secondment

takes place and where appropriate would form the business case for not allowing the employee to undertake the secondment opportunity. Advice can be sought on this from Human Resources if required.

- g) Substantive managers should maintain contact with the secondee during the secondment.

7.3 Employees/Secondees' Responsibilities

- a) Employees wishing to apply for a secondment post must obtain agreement from their substantive manager whose signature must be on the application form. (Appendix 2)
- b) Individuals on secondment must consider how this learning opportunity will develop and support their personal development in line with their aims, objectives and targets established during the Performance Development Review Scheme (PDRS).

7.4 Human Resources Responsibility

- 7.4.1 HR must work with managers to support the secondment policy and process.

8.0 Terms and Conditions

8.1 Policies

- 8.1.1 East Herts policies will apply except for external secondments.

8.2 Pay

- 8.2.1 A post offered as a secondment will be offered at the grade for the post. If the grade of the seconded post is a lower graded post, the seconded employee will continue to receive the pay for

his/her substantive post (in accordance with the protection afforded in redeployment situations).

8.3 Notice Periods

8.3.1 The secondment agreement should stipulate an agreed notice period for all parties to notify of early termination of the secondment agreement, which should not exceed one month.

9.0 Health & Safety and Employers' Liability

9.1 The host manager/organisation is responsible for all health and safety obligations for the duration of the secondment.

10.0 Indemnity

10.1 The host organisation will keep East Herts and the seconded employee full indemnified against any claims which may be incurred as a result of carrying out duties for the host over the duration of an external secondment.

11.0 Conduct and Capability

11.1 The host manager (internal) will deal with any concerns regarding conduct and capability under the East Herts probationary policy, Managing Performance or any other relevant policy. The host manager must liaise with the substantive manager. If there are any concerns about work performance in the seconded post, consideration will need to be given to reverting the employee to their previous post. The host manager must ensure that adequate training and support has been provided to the employee. For external secondments, the policies and procedures of the host organisation will prevail.

11.2 Code of Conduct

- 11.2.1 The East Herts Code of Conduct will apply to secondments within East Herts and the code of conduct for the receiving organisation will apply to external secondments.

11.3 Confidential Information

- 11.3.1 Confidential information will remain the property of the host department or organisation. The secondee should be aware that breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously by the Council.

12.0 Provisions for Secondee

- 12.1 Secondees should consider what they expect to achieve for the duration of the secondment post to provide clear expectations and outcomes for the position.

- 12.2 On return to their substantive post, the line manager and secondee should review the learning achieved, and as service demands allow the secondee to use some part of their new knowledge or skills gained in their secondment placement.

- 12.3 Secondees are encouraged to keep in touch with their substantive team and manager and they should receive regular information and updates from their substantive manager.

13.0 Provisions for a Manager

- 13.1 Where possible the manager should identify a mentor to each secondee to support their personal and career development throughout the duration of the secondment.

14.0 Difficulties/Problems securing a Secondment

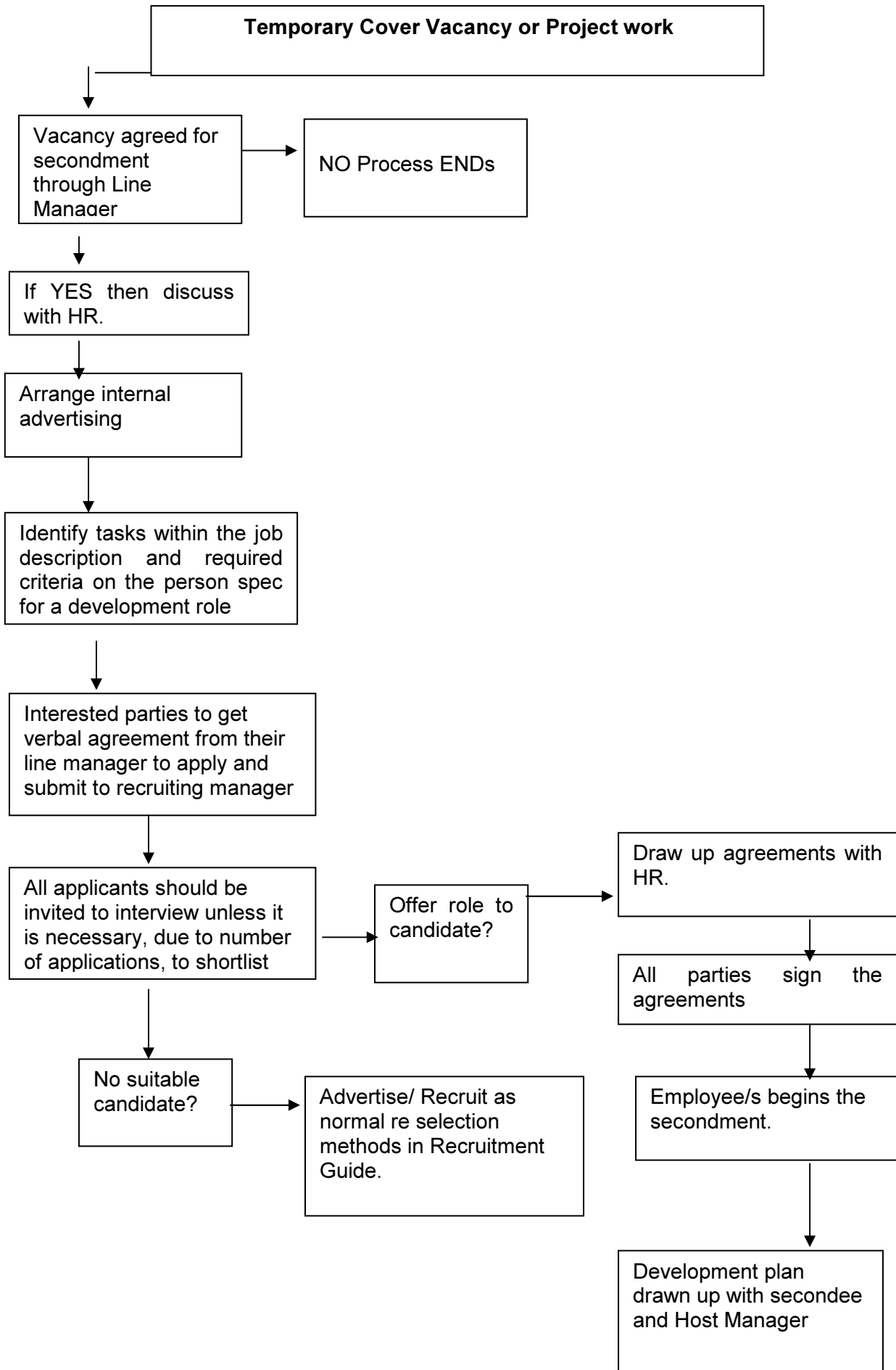
- 14.1 Secondees should first raise this with their substantive manager and consult HR for advice. Substantive or host

managers should also consult HR. The aim will be resolve problems at an early stage. If employees feel that their substantive manager is unfairly refusing to support their application for a secondment position, then they may raise the issue with their Head of Service and consult with Human Resources.

15.0 Policy Review and Amendment

This Policy shall be reviewed after two years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.

Secondment Flow Chart – Internal Secondments



EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 24 MAY 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7. HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT – MAY 2011

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *None specific*

Purpose/Summary of Report:

To update Human Resources Committee on people management and Human Resources delivery.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR :</u>	
(A)	That the quarterly performance report be noted.

1.0 Background

1.1 Following a request from the Chairman of HR Committee a report on HR Team Current and Future Events April 2008 was submitted to HR Committee on 24 April 2008. The Committee welcomed the report and requested updates to be provided to each Committee.

1.2 The report was redesigned to include an update on people management and HR delivery. The first report was submitted to HR Committee on 16 July 2008.

1.3 This report will be updated and submitted to each Committee on a quarterly basis.

1.4 The report will be used to report on progress on the People Strategy 2009-2012 and demonstrate the difference being made to the Council as a result of implementation of the strategy.

2.0 Report

2.1 See the HR Quarterly Performance Report: May 2011 (Essential Reference Paper B).

3.0 Implications/Consultations

Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers

None.

Contact Member: Portfolio holder for Human Resources Matters.

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman – Head of Human Resources, Extn: 1635.

Report Author: Emma Freeman – Head of Human Resources, Extn: 1635.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives (delete as appropriate):	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	As this is a quarterly update no consultation has been carried out.
Legal:	The actions assist the Council in complying with best practice and current employment legislation.
Financial:	To be addressed within People and Organisational Services budget
Human Resource:	HR Quarterly Performance Report updates the Committee on the strategic and operational issues on people management for that quarter as necessary to ensure the Council maximises the potential within its workforce and ensures all procedures are robust.
Risk Management:	None.

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HR Quarterly Performance Report: May 2011

People stats 1/4/2010 - 31/3/2011 as at 31 March 2011

Current Headcount:	357	Number of leavers:	30
Number of Starters:	20	Number FTE funded vacancies:	15.75
Current Turnover:	8.24%	Number of posts advertised (national and local press):	14
Average advertising cost per vacancy (based on No of posts advertised)	£581.84	Average No short term sickness days per FTE staff in post:	4.73

The following actions support the People Strategy 2009-2012:

Management Actions to mitigate increased pressures (Medium Term Financial Plan)

HR is currently supporting a number of service changes including restructures, TUPE transfers and shared service programmes.

Resourcing

Recruitment has been limited to priority roles and advertised internally first. Some recruitment has been advertised externally through Manpower where the post has not been filled internally but this has been limited and continues to be monitored.

The recruitment and selection policy is currently being updated to reflect best practice and support Manpower procedures.

Learning and Development

A Members Training Plan has been developed to support members in the initial months of this electoral term. A full and comprehensive training calendar for the year will be set round to members directly once finalised.

Corporate Training Plan (CTP)

The Corporate training plan 2010/11 has been completed focusing on change management, business improvement, flexible/home working, mandatory and legal training. The end of year report will be presented to HRC in July 2011.

The Corporate Training Plan 2011/12 is currently being developed.

PDRS

The full year PDR reviews were completed in January/February 2011. The return rate of performance reviews is 73% and 67% objectives set. Outstanding forms are being chased as a priority.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER B

A PDR quality review is currently being completed on the 2010/11 end of year PDRs. This is to ensure that PDRs are of good quality and are graded correctly. A report will be made to CMT and HRC following the outcome of the review.

Policies

The following policies are subject to approval by HR Committee May 2011:

- Secondment policy
- Probation policy

The following policies are currently being reviewed/developed for the next quarter:

- Maternity policy (being updated to reflect the new Paternity entitlements)
- Bullying & Harassment policy
- Disturbance policy
- Job Evaluation policy

Equalities and Diversity

The Equality Act includes a specific duty to publish annual details about equality in the workforce. Organisations are required to publish the first set of workforce data and analysis by the 31st December 2011.

The workforce data requirements of the duty are beyond scope of the Council's current employee data. The general equality duty also requires the Council to analyse the effect of the organisation's functions on all protected groups. To meet this requirement a data cleanse has been completed in April 2011. A report and any associated action plan will be sent to CMT and on to HRC July 2011.

Following the data cleanse, an Equal Pay Audit will be completed in July/August 2011. The proposed methodology will be reported to LJP in June 2011 and HRC in July 2011. It is planned that the outcome of the review is reported in September/October 2011.

In accordance with the removal of the default retirement age, a collective agreement has been reached with Unison that employee's contracts of employment are amended to remove the retirement age of 65.

C3W Programme

This quarter has focused on the internal moves within Wallfields and preparing for the office moves from Bishops Stortford to Wallfields in July 2011.

A review of the traffic light assessments was completed in February 2011 using a short follow-up questionnaire to see if employees' circumstances have changed since the exercise was first completed. A 98% return rate was achieved. Follow up meetings were held with Heads of Service, which resulted in the final traffic light figures of: 1 red, 2 amber and 335 green. Any remaining red or amber ratings are due to genuine unresolved issues arising from the move, such as travel or childcare arrangements. Green ratings mean that a member of staff can work from home, flexibly or has a workstation at Wallfields or Charringtons House.

A car parking procedure has been developed outlining the proposed procedure for managing Wallfields car park once Wallfields is the main office base.

A review was completed on the feasibility of introducing Pool Cars. It was concluded that it was not cost effective until the protections as a result of the review of terms and conditions cease.

Other

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Council will go out to tender on the Cycle to Work Scheme in June 2011.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
 LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
 WAYTEMORE ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES,
 THE CAUSEWAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD
 ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2011, AT
 2.00 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillor M Wood
 Councillors S Rutland-Barsby, L O Haysey
 and J O Ranger

Staff Side (UNISON)

B Dodkins, Mrs J Sharp and Mr A Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services

14 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Chris Clowes and Councillors M R Alexander and A P Jackson. It was noted that Councillors L O Haysey and J O Ranger were substituting for Councillors A P Jackson and Councillor M R Alexander respectively. It was also noted that Paul Stevens was substituting for Chris Clowes.

15 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, welcomed back Emma Freeman and congratulated her on the birth of her daughter.

16 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2010 be received.

18 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted detailed comments in response to the Budget Proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2011/12 to 2014/15. The Director of Internal Services on behalf of the Secretary to the Employer's Side, submitted his response to those comments.

The Staff Side expressed concern that the MTFP report was confusing and was difficult to understand and track what was going on in terms of staffing implications. She commented on the sometimes conflicting figures which had been made available on the intranet and of the overuse of jargon and the differing estimates contained in related papers which made it difficult for a lay person to understand. The Staff Side said that it was good news that the Council was saving so much money which was in the main as a result of the refuse contract with Veolia.

The Staff Side Secretary queried whether the contractors could fulfil all their contractual obligations to achieve the savings and queried whether staff would be paid minimum wage. She stated that the absence of benchmarking had made it impossible to compare tenders. The Director of Internal Services gave assurances that the tender process

had been competitive. Councillor Rutland-Barsby stated that she had played a role in evaluating tenders and the tender had not been awarded to the cheapest tenderer as there was a quality objective to be achieved.

Reserves:

The Staff Side referred to the substantial level of reserves the Council had and that the Council should draw on that level of reserves to make savings. The Director of Internal Services sought clarification on the reference to “specialist advisor” mentioned by the Staff Side. The Staff Side clarified this statement. The Director concurred that the budget papers and the process was complicated but that Members and Staff had had an opportunity to ask questions about the process and proposals since the process had begun in July 2010. Information had also been made available on the Council’s website and the process had been submitted to scrutiny for comment.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that the Council had healthy reserves and that more were being put into earmarked reserves which had been supported by Audit Committee. He explained the variances within the reports and refuted the suggestion put forward by UNISON that the budget was “smoke and mirrors”. In terms of typographical errors, the Director referred to the difficulty in co-ordinating six separate reports at a time.

Outturn:

The Staff Side referred to a number of variances within the report and the projected overspend which had later turned out to be a large underspend (e.g. the refuse contract). The Director of Internal Services confirmed that the £82,000 net positive variance was correct. He provided updates in relation to budget monitoring and on the latest estimates.

The Staff Side referred to the impact of cuts on back office functions as well as front line functions and services and referred to home workers’ heavy reliance on the services of IT

staff.

Redundancies:

The Staff Side referred to a comment by the Director of Internal Services confirming that there would be compulsory redundancies. The Staff Side suggested that the £400,000 earmarked for this in this financial year would be insufficient and would not cover costs. The Staff Side stated that the list did not mention redundancy costs and queried how the level of savings would be achieved. She stressed that savings should be achieved via natural wastage, voluntary redundancies, early and voluntary retirement.

The Staff Side expressed concern about redundancies and the low morale of staff and of the fact that disillusioned staff would leave when the job market improved. The Staff Side referred to the fact that a number of senior managers had been made redundant and the impact on pensions going back to 2004.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there had been two redundancies last year which had been driven by necessity when the process started around savings and there were issues where efficiency savings could be made. He stated that the Council did not start out with a target in mind to create a level of redundancies and would always endeavour to reduce costs without recourse to redundancies. It was anticipated that within the next four years there would be redundancies and it was hoped that compulsory redundancies could be minimised.

Councillor J O Ranger stated that he would not want to see redundancies and would prefer other ways to reduce costs such as reducing working hours. Councillor Ranger referred to the CV (Curriculum Vitae) "Bank" whereby individuals could register their CV which would also be viewed by the 300 companies in the private sector.

The Staff Side referred to Strategic Direction and that some staff were keen to take voluntary redundancy but this was not

supported by Human Resources. The Director confirmed that there were robust processes in situ and of the need for the Council to manage what staff it did not want to lose.

The Director of Internal Services acknowledged the fact that Senior Managers were aware of the low morale and that this would be addressed via a number of staff briefings which would consider the issue of the culture of the Council and behaviours between colleagues and the public.

The Staff Side stated that a worker earning between £8,000 - £9,000 a year and had the threat of losing an income, would not be able to remain motivated. The Director suggested that it was about adopting either a positive or negative attitude. The Staff Side stressed that the issue was about uncertainty of the future and that the process of managing staff expectations and uncertainty was not helped when particular roles were highlighted in the budget to disappear.

The Director of Internal Services explained that where any posts were considered at risk then meetings would first have been held with those individuals. He explained the process of consultation. The Head of People and Organisational Services stated that there would always be uncertainty until the formal consultation process had been reached.

UNISON felt that residents and staff needed to be protected and recommended that the levels of savings suggested be delayed for a financial year. At that point the C3W process would have taken place and from then, it would be possible to establish what natural wastage had occurred and so avoid compulsory redundancies.

Strategic Direction:

The Staff Side were concerned about the cuts projected for this section and the impact this would have on individuals. From the new structure there would be one redundancy and possibly three others. UNISON was aware of the large reduction in formula grants and of the need to work co-operatively. The Staff Side stressed that change needed to

be managed well.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that processes were being followed and that the Chief Executive would be preparing proposals. The Director confirmed that senior managers would not be exempted from the proposals.

Partnership Working:

UNISON supported a partnership approach to working but not if this was detrimental to service provision.

Member Allowances:

The Staff Side considered the suggestion of a pay increase to Members to be insensitive at this juncture especially as staff would have to endure a pay freeze for the next 2/3 years. The Director of Internal Services stated that there were no proposals to increase Members' Allowances but that he could not predict what the Independent Review Panel might suggest.

Training Budget:

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there would be a reduction in the training budget. In response to a query by Councillor J O Ranger, the Director confirmed that on average, the Council spent £200 per employee on training which was well above the average for other Councils.

Grant Reduction:

The Director of Internal Services explained that there had been a 16.2% reduction in Government Grant and that investment income was £850,000 below budget. In terms of the suggestion of "over-taxed residents" the Director explained that of the 201 Councils, East Herts was the 89th cheapest in Council Tax Band "D" and were in the 2nd quartile of the lowest increases. Councillor J O Ranger referred to the fact the Scrutiny had recommended to the Executive that Council Tax be frozen for two years.

The Staff Side referred to the lack of engagement with the community about the provision of services. He referred to the fact that the Government was promoting “localism” but were not following through and that it was up to local councillors to make a case to protect services and to find out from the community which services they wished to support. Councillor J O Ranger stated that there was little change to the services residents already received and that no vital services were being cut. The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there had been consultation and that the public were happy to see savings and had even suggested a reduction in Police Community Support Officers.

The Director of Internal Services felt that the suggestion to use reserves as recommended by UNISON were not savings. As a way forward, it was suggested that UNISON’s comments and the Council’s response be referred to the Executive for their consideration.

The Panel supported this approach.

RESOLVED – that UNISON’s comments on the budget and the Director of Internal Services’ response be referred to the Executive.

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Chairman
Date

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2011,
AT 2.30 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillor Mike Wood (Chairman)
Councillors A P Jackson and S Rutland-
Barsby

Staff Side (UNISON)

Mrs J Sharp, Mr P Stevens and
Mr A Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services

19 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M
Alexander and Brenda Dodkins.

20 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman referred to the recent sad news concerning
Councillor D A A Peek. He stated that although Councillor
Peek was not a Member of the Local Joint Panel, he had
attended LJP meetings frequently. With the consent of the
Panel, the Chairman requested that a minute's silence be
observed. The Panel agreed.

21 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22 SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011 be received.

23 SECONDMENT POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report concerning a recent update of the Secondment Policy. The Policy had been revised following the recent increases in secondments and the need to make it "fit for purpose". The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained the rationale for the changes proposed. These were set out Essential Reference Paper B attached to the report now submitted.

The Staff Side drew attention to the time timeframe proposed of six months between each secondment and of the administrative and management difficulties this might create within some services and particularly in the light of the fact that staff vacancies could not be externally advertised. It was suggested that paragraph 4.5 be amended to provide an element of flexibility and in order to highlight the fact that there may be exceptions to the timescale stipulated in order to provide continuity of service.

The Secretary to Employer's Side explained that it was hoped that the minimum of six months between each secondment opportunity would provide a sense of balance.

The Panel supported an amendment to paragraph 4.5 and a revised form of wording.

RESOLVED - that (A) paragraph 4.5 be amended by the inclusion of "Generally, a minimum of six months

between each secondment opportunity would apply but that exceptions may be agreed by the substantive Manager in order to ensure continuity of service”.

(B) the Secondment Policy as amended, be approved.

24 PROBATIONARY POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer’s Side submitted a report on a new Probationary Policy which would establish best practise throughout the Council. The Secretary to the Employer’s Side explained how the Policy would apply to new employees and those with continuous local government service. It was noted that some Council’s had introduced a probationary period for all new staff, irrespective of whether they had local government experience or not.

The Local Joint Panel was concerned that the Policy as proposed, established two different approaches i.e. for staff who were new and those who had continuous service and of the difficulties that may ensue with two differing approaches.

The Local Joint Panel felt that a Policy should be developed which would apply to all staff. The Local Joint Panel requested the report be deferred for further discussion by the Secretaries to the Employer’s Side and the Staff Side.

RESOLVED – that the report be deferred for further discussion by the Secretaries to the Employer’s Side and Staff Side.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Chairman
Date

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