

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE –13 FEBRUARY 2001

SINGLE STATUS

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Sub-Committee on the Council's response to the Single Status Agreement.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Single Status Agreement relates to the Local Government Employees pay award body, which encompasses the former APT&C staff and Manual workers groups. The Single Status agreement does not apply to Chief Officers or Craft Operatives at this time. In summary, the agreement aims to harmonise pay and conditions of service arrangements for the new award body, ensuring an equality of treatment for all employee groups therein.
- 2.2 The Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 21 November 2000, noted the update position with regard to implementation of the single status agreement and asked the Head of Personnel to provide future reports to the Committee.

3. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 3.1 As previously reported, the Conditions of Service Group are continuing to review conditions of service to identify harmonisation issues and areas for local flexibility.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Conditions of Service Group develop a conditions of service package that meets the existing and future needs of the Council, the Head of Personnel has held consultation meetings with all service departments. The consultation exercise has been a positive exercise and will ensure that operational needs are reflected in any future policy recommendations to this Sub-Committee.

4. JOB EVALUATION

- 4.1 Members will recall that the Job Evaluation Steering Group agreed to conduct a small pilot exercise before starting to implement the job evaluation scheme. The purpose of this pilot exercise was to provide job analysts with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the computerised version of the scheme and enable the Steering Group to consider feedback from jobholders, line managers, trade union representatives and analysts.
- 4.2 The groups that participated in this pilot exercise were drawn from the following sections of the Council:

- ◆ Department of Community Services - Dean Castle Country Park
- ◆ Department of Educational & Social Services - Rosebank Residential Unit

- ◆ Department of Educational & Social Services - Onsite (Janitorial Services)
- ◆ Department of Homes and Technical Services - Area Housing Team

4.3 Feedback questionnaires were issued to all those who participated in the pilot exercise, although the return rate was rather disappointing (36% overall response rate). The main points for noting from the analysis of questionnaires that were returned are as follows:

- ◆ 78% of those who attended a briefing session found it useful
- ◆ 80% of those who attended a discussion with a Job Analyst felt that the Analyst acted independently
- ◆ 100% of those who attended a discussion with a Job Analyst felt that the Analyst was helpful during the process
- ◆ Jobholders took on average 3 ½ hours to complete a Scottish Councils Job Evaluation Scheme Jobholder questionnaire
- ◆ Discussions between jobholders and analysts lasted on average 2 ½ to 3 hours
- ◆ 80% of those asked to complete a Scottish Councils Job Evaluation Scheme Jobholder questionnaire found it complex or difficult
- ◆ 78% of job holders stated that the Job Overview Document reflected the job that they did

4.4 In summary, the overall response to the pilot exercise has been positive and the local process agreed with trade unions would appear to stand the Council in good stead for the main exercise involving all Local Government employees. However, the specific feedback in relation to the completion of the Scottish Councils Job Evaluation Scheme Jobholder questionnaire is a concern and will be highlighted to COSLA and given further consideration locally.

4.5 Following the opportunity to use the computerised version of the job evaluation scheme within the pilot exercise, the Job Analyst Team is now ready to start gathering job information from representative jobholders. There are however some changes being made to improve the usability of the software at a national level. Accordingly, local authorities have been advised to await the issue of the revised software before starting the evaluation process. This delay is outwith the control of the Council and is likely to delay the implementation timescales within the project plan by at least two months. The trade unions have been advised and Members will be kept up to date of any further delays that may impact on the overall implementation timescale.

5. COMMUNICATION

5.1 The Council has remained proactive in ensuring regular communication with employees covered by the Single Status Agreement. Since the last update to Members, an Employee Information Leaflet No.6 on Job Evaluation has been drafted for issue to employees with March payslips. It is anticipated that this leaflet will address any queries that employees will have at this time. The Employee Helpline and Intranet pages also remain in place.

6. TRADE UNIONS

6.1 The Council recognises the importance of involving trade unions within the Single Status implementation process and the significant benefits that can be gained by adopting a partnership approach.

6.2 The Head of Personnel has ensured regular consultation with trade union representatives and can confirm that the discussions have been very positive in considering a very challenging issue. Meetings will continue on a regular basis as the implementation of the agreement progresses and further information on the impact of the job evaluation exercise becomes available.

7. LEGAL / AUTHORITY / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As previously reported, the financial implications for the authority arising from Single Status cannot yet be quantified. The Director of Finance has however been asked to consider the potential impact of the agreement as he advises the Council in the preparation of its budgets for 2002/3 on. This situation will be closely monitored and covered in future update reports to the Sub-Committee as more information becomes available.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- (a) note this report updating the Committee on the Council's response to the Single Status Agreement for Local Government employees; and
- (b) ask the Head of Personnel to provide future update reports.

Fiona Lees

Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

22 January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report by Director of Corporate Resources to Personnel and Property Sub-Committee meeting of 16 November 1999.
2. Report by Director of Corporate Resources to Personnel and Property Sub-Committee meeting of 7 March 2000.
3. Report by Director of Corporate Resources to Personnel and Property Sub-Committee meeting of 28 September 2000.
4. Report by Director of Corporate Resources to Personnel and Property Sub-Committee meeting of 21 November 2000.

Anyone wishing further information should contact Graham Haugh, Head of Personnel, telephone 01563 576092.

H/reports/13feb01/single status

AGENDA