

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET ON 31 MARCH 2015 FROM THE RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE PANEL AT ITS MEETING ON 24 MARCH 2015

RP135: CABINET REPORT: CORPORATE APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

In presenting the report, the Personnel Services Manager reminded the Panel that in October 2012 Cabinet agreed to the introduction of an Apprenticeship Scheme within the Council. As a result, six apprentices had been employed on 18 month fixed term contracts which were supernumerary to the Council's fixed term establishment list. The six apprentices had now completed their training and following a review of the scheme and consideration of the findings of the review by Management Team, it was proposed to employ a further six apprentices during 2015.

Members were provided with background information and the Personnel Services Manager outlined the current position as set out at section 2 of the report.

Councillor Mrs Mellish referred to paragraph 6.1 relating to where the advertisements were currently placed and asked whether a wider audience should be included, the Personnel Services Manager explained that currently advertisements were placed at the College of West Anglia, the Council's web site and the Job Centres at King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market. The Personnel Services Manager advised that previously more contact had been made with high schools, but this was dependant on the timing within the school year and had generated little response.

In response to questions from Councillor Gourlay on the Borough Council having the scope for more than 6 apprenticeships, the Personnel Services Manager explained that some job roles within the Borough Council were more appropriate to place an apprentice. However, when apprentices were appointed they had limited skills and had required a level of support to develop, progress and obtain qualifications. At present, Management Team had determined that this was the best opportunity the Borough Council could provide. The Leader added that this had been a Conservative initiative and that the Borough Council had in fact been responsible for the recruitment of more than six apprentices by encouraging other businesses to establish an Apprenticeship Scheme.

Councillor C J Crofts asked if the current apprentices had secured permanent employment. The Personnel Services Manager advised that one apprentice who had completed a business administration apprenticeship had been appointed to the Trainee Procurement Officer post within the Borough Council. Another apprentice had been appointed to a permanent post within the Leisure service area, one had gone on to further education and another apprentice had secured permanent employment elsewhere.

Councillor Collop concurred with the comments made by the Leader and commented that at a previous meeting he had asked the Leader to consider a Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme.

In response to comments from Councillor Morrison regarding the disappointing response received from schools, the Personnel Services Manager explained that the Council had engaged with high schools and promoted the scheme in a variety of ways. The Leader added that the quality of applications received had been poor, however, the Borough Council would persevere and continue to raise awareness of the Borough Council's Apprenticeship Scheme. The Leader further commented that over the past 18 months schools had promoted the scheme more widely and raised student awareness that an apprenticeship was a worthwhile career option.

Following comments from Councillors Gourlay and Chenery, the Personnel Manager explained that positive feedback had been received and the scheme provided an understanding of the work world. Apprentices were made aware that it was not envisaged that they would automatically be given a job at the Borough Council.

The Chairman, Councillor Humphrey thanked the Personnel Services Manager for presenting the report.

RESOLVED: That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

- 1) That Cabinet supports the continuation of the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme by the employment of six new apprentices on 18 month Fixed Term Contracts which are supernumerary to the Fixed Term Establishment List.
- 2) That these posts be funded corporately and that the total cost of the apprentices be met from the budget provision included within the Financial Plan for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

RP136: **CABINET REPORT: STAFF PAY AWARD**

The Personnel Services Manager presented the report and explained that the Council's annual pay increase for all employees was locally determined having regard to national, regional and local pay and labour market information. The report recommended the pay increase for 2015/16 and outlined the budget implications.

The Panel was informed that the pay increases over the past 5 years were detailed at section 1 of the report.

Members' attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- National Negotiations.

- Proposal.
- Trade Union Comments.
- Financial Implications.

The Panel was invited to ask questions/comment on the report, a summary of which is set out below.

The Chairman, Councillor Humphrey asked what the overall cost was to the Council of the 1% pay rise. In response, the Personnel Services Manager confirmed the overall cost was estimated to be around £160,000.

Councillor Mrs Mellish commented that she supported the 1% pay rise and to award an additional .5% pay rise to the Authority's lowest paid workers, but raised concern regarding the proposed £250 one-off payment to staff in recognition of the fact that in 2014/15 savings against target had been achieved and added that perhaps the budget for the £250 lump sum instead be directed to the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The Leader advised that it was his recommendation to award £250 lump sum to employees in recognition of the savings targets which had been achieved. He explained that most efficiencies had been identified by staff and therefore the one off payment of £250 as worthwhile in order to give the results to identify further efficiencies and savings.

In response to questions from Councillor Gourlay regarding Trade Union comments, GMB involvement, and the increase in welfare cases, the Personnel Services Manager advised that there were GMB members within the Council and that they had been involved in the consultation process. The Chief Executive added that it was proposed to recognise the particular difficulties faced by the Council's lowest paid workers by awarding an additional .5%. The Chief Executive explained that a lump sum of £250 was of more value to lower paid employees to assist them in difficult times.

Councillor Collop concurred with the comments made by the Leader in awarding staff a £250 lump sum to recognise their efforts in identifying savings. It was important to retain good staff.

The Chairman, Councillor Humphrey commended the staff for identifying efficiencies and savings and added that the £250 lump sum was an incentive for further efficiencies to be achieved.

RESOLVED: The Panel supports the recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

- 1) That an annual pay award of 1% be implemented with effect from 1 April 2015.
- 2) That staff earning less than £21,500 (FTE) be awarded an additional 0.5% increase with effect from 1 April 2015.

- 3) That the authority increases its minimum wage to £7.20 per hour and adjusts the bottom point of PG13 accordingly.
- 4) That a flat rate and non-consolidated lump sum, not exceeding £250 per full-time employee (pro rata for part time), be awarded to all permanent/ fixed term employees, who were in post on 1.10.14 on a one-off basis in recognition of the Authority exceeding its budgeted savings target for 2014/15.
- 5) That this proposal be presented to the Board of Alive Leisure for agreement in respect of all Joint Employees.

RP137: EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

RP138: EXEMPT CABINET REPORT: PROPOSED ACQUISITION - FORMER GRAIN SILO SITE AT SOUTH QUAY

The Portfolio Holder, Regeneration and Industrial Assets presented the report and explained that the former Grain Silo site was prominently located on the South Quay in King's Lynn. The Borough Council had been interested in acquiring this site for a number of years to contribute to the Council's regeneration ambitions for King's Lynn, and the site was currently available for sale. Discussions had been held with the current owners of the site, and preliminary terms for acquiring the site had been negotiated. The report set out the terms for the Borough Council to acquire the freehold of the site, and sought authority from Cabinet to progress the acquisition.

The Leader, Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive responded to comments and questions from the Panel.

Councillor J Collop requested that it be recorded that he was against the recommendation set out in the Cabinet report.

RESOLVED: The Panel support the recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Note the content of this report.
- 2) Grant authority to the Council's Property Services Manager to finalise the terms for the acquisition of the site.

- 3) Authorise the Council's Legal Services provider to effect and complete all necessary legal documentation associated with the acquisition of the site.