

AGREED Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held at 5:00pm on 12th November 2024

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Cllr Lynne Grimshaw (Chair), Cllr Matthew Cuthbert, Cllr Graeme Wright, Cllr Pauline Thompson, Cllr Paul Wright

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Eden – Clerk/RFO

PC24/011 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Cllr Lynne Grimshaw welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PC24/012 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mark Purvis.

PC24/013 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None.

PC24/014 DISPENSATIONS

None to consider.

PC24/015 DRAFT MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23rd JULY 2024

It was AGREED to APPROVE the minutes as a true record.

PC24/016 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was AGREED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, permitted under Section 1 (2) LGA 1960, due to the confidential nature of the business being transacted.

The Chair asked if members would agree to agenda item 8, Pension Policy being brought forward, prior to Remuneration. **It was AGREED.**

PC24/017 PENSION POLICY

The Executive Officer presented two draft policies for consideration:

- Ashington Town Council Pensions and Flexible Retirement Policy
- Ashington Town Council Pension Discretions Policy

The Committee noted that these policies have been developed to ensure compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations and to provide clear guidance for both the Council and employees.

Key points included:

a) The Pensions and Flexible Retirement Policy:

- Establishes clear eligibility criteria and application processes for flexible retirement.
- Outlines options for reduction in hours or responsibilities for employees aged 55+
- Details of the assessment criteria for requests, including operational impact and cost recovery
- Provides a structured appeal process.
- Includes provisions for ongoing support and regular review.

b) The Pension Discretions Policy:

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- Fulfills the statutory requirement to publish specific LGPS discretions.
- Provides clear guidelines on the Council's approach to:
 - Employee contribution bands assessment
 - Shared cost additional pension contributions
 - Early retirement on compassionate grounds
 - Actuarial reduction waivers
 - Additional pension awards
- Ensures compliance with relevant LGPS regulations.
- Includes provisions for annual review and monitoring.

The Executive Officer advised that they were doing further training on this subject at the beginning of December and would prefer the policy to be presented to Full Council once this has been completed.

In answer to a question from the committee, the Executive Officer confirmed that advice had been sought from South Tyneside Council, who administer the LGPS on behalf of Northumberland.

It was AGREED both policies be recommended to Full Council for adoption, following a final check post-training.

PC24/019 REMUNERATION

a) NJC Pay Deal, backdated to April 2024

The Committee was presented with the new National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services rates of pay applicable from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, with notes relating to all members of staff, and confirming that all have been advised of the change, and that backdated pay will be received in December.

b) Salary Scale Progression

The Committee was advised of those members of staff who are within their respective scales and subject to automatic annual increments, with notes as to where this was placed on new NJC Pay Scales. The Executive Officer detailed that progression is contractual, subject to satisfactory performance, but that it is appropriate that this is endorsed by the Personnel Committee, in line with terms of reference.

In response to questions regarding performance and goal setting, the Executive Officer confirmed that annual reviews were carried out, but this was not the standard appraisal review some may be familiar with. The Executive Officer to share the details of the process put in place, and any questions can be brought back.

c) Salary Scale Progression (not automatic)

The Committee was advised of those members of staff who have reached the maximum point in the current NJC salary scale, with progression previously automatic based on satisfactory performance, namely the Assets and Development Manager, and Executive Officer.

The Executive Officer presented recommendations for salary scale progression in relation to the Assets and Development Mgr, supported by a role evaluation following the NALC:SLCC Joint Agreement on Terms and Conditions.

The Committee noted the following context for the evaluations for the Council Profile 2024/25:

- Annual Budget: £1,240,423

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- Annual Precept: £899,950
- Number of Councillors: 18
- Meetings per Year: 18+

Number of Functions: 8 (including Allotments, Play Areas, Planters/Beds/Baskets, War Memorial and Monuments, Bus Shelters, Public Seating, Public Waste Bins, and Interactive Speed Signs)

The evaluation process followed the NALC:SLCC assessment framework, considering:

- Knowledge
- Mental Skills
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Initiative and Independence
- Responsibility for People
- Responsibility for Supervision/Direction of Employees
- Responsibility for Financial Resources
- Responsibility for Physical Resources

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED to recommend** the proposed salary scale for the Assets and Development Manager to Full Council for approval.

The progression reflects the scope and responsibilities of the role as assessed against the NALC:SLCC framework, with implementation to be effective from 1st April 2025, subject to Full Council approval.

The Executive Officer left the meeting at 17:25 whilst the Committee considered the remuneration in respect of the Executive Officer.

The Personnel Committee reviewed the Executive Officer's role against the job evaluation framework.

It was AGREED to recommend the salary scale progression in view of the size, complexity and responsibilities of the role. Furthermore, **it was AGREED** to recommend an automatic annual increment be included as part of the employment contract, as is the case for all other roles.

The Personnel Committee therefore recommends that the Full Council approve the proposed salary scale progression for the Executive Officer/RFO position, effective from 1st April 2025, and becoming automatic within the pay scale in subsequent years.

It was AGREED to arrange a formal review with the Executive Officer in the New Year.

The meeting ended at 17:40pm.