

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Staffing Portfolio Holder
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive/Job Analyst

20 November 2008

PAY AND GRADING REVIEW UPDATE Briefing Note

Purpose

1. To update the Portfolio Holder on the progress made by the Job Evaluation Project Group.

Background

2. In April 1997 a new national agreement was reached covering former APT&C and manual employees and combining their status under one Handbook, the "Green Book". Part 1 of the agreement covers principles; Part 2 contains national provisions while Part 3 contains other national provisions, which may be modified locally by negotiation between Councils and the relevant trade unions. Such Agreements were required to be in place by April 2007.
3. A draft Single Status Agreement was raised with the unions in January 2006. The unions indicated concerns that the current Job Evaluation scheme used by the Council (Monks 6 factor) may not be acceptable to them on the basis of not meeting the equal pay legal requirements. At a further meeting with the unions in April 2006, the unions stated that the Council may not get a Single Status Agreement without implementing a new job evaluation scheme.
4. In November 2006 the GMB and UNISON representatives confirmed that the national position had changed in the light of some high profile Employment Tribunal cases and that they would require SCDC to undertake an equal pay audit and equality impact assessment on the Job Evaluation scheme. The Council is required to carry out equal pay audits to ensure the scheme still meets legislative requirements and it was agreed that the Council would commission Project HR to conduct an equal pay audit in an attempt to move the single status process forward.
5. Project HR conducted an Equal Pay Audit in Spring/ Summer 2007. The recommendations of the report have been discussed by SMT and at joint meetings with the two trade unions.
6. The Staffing and Communications Portfolio Holder considered a report at her meeting on 24th January 2008 and recommended to Cabinet that the Council make changes to the job evaluation and pay and grading structure and implement the NJC job evaluation scheme and a new pay structure process.
7. A project plan was developed by the HR Manager and agreed with both trade unions. Recruitment of a specialist Job Analyst was undertaken and an appointment was made in June 2008.

Update on project progress

8. The project plan and terms of reference were formally agreed at the joint union meeting in April 2008. The Job Evaluation and Equal Pay Steering Group (JEEPSG) was convened, its membership includes, the Chief Executive, HR Manager, regional union representatives from GMB and UNISON and Project HR Consultant.
9. Job Analyst, Debbie Blow, joined the project in June and commenced work on identifying and agreeing a range of benchmark posts to be evaluated. These were drawn from the whole organisation as a representative sample of traditional male & female roles, manual and office roles, managerial, professional officer and unskilled roles. A Job Description Questionnaire (JDQ) format was agreed. Protocols and conventions have been drafted and are currently subject to consultation with the unions. A copy of the Project Plan is at **Appendix 1**

The position so far

10. All benchmark jobholders, and their managers', were contacted and interviews were scheduled to take place commencing June and this part of the project was completed in September. A second tranche has also now been completed and third and fourth tranches are scheduled to be completed by late March 2009. See table below for information on the number of job-holders to date.

Table 1

Tranche	Status	No. of Jobs	Approx. No. of employees	No. of returned & fully verified JDQs
Benchmark /first	Completed – all jobholders seen by job analyst & completed JDQ	44	259	15
Second	Will be completed by mid November	38	81	4
Third	Jobs & Jobholders selected – due to start mid November – complete end of January	41	44	N/a
Fourth	Jobs & Jobholders selected – due to start early February 09 – complete mid to late March 09	41	44	N/a
Totals	Predicted - By end of March 09	164	428	N/a

Key points to note

11.
 - All 'high occupancy' jobs have been included in the first tranche, this includes; Sheltered Housing Officers, Refuse Operatives and General Trades.
 - All posts which have been identified as potential TUPE transfers, in the event of a housing stock transfer will be covered by the 3rd and 4th tranches with the aim of this part of the exercise being concluded prior to the tenant ballot.

- To date, there has been positive feedback from jobholders who have been through the JDQ interview process. They have been willing to meet with Job Analyst and feel well informed about project and process, this has been due to successful and ongoing communication of JE project.
- Union comments have been positive and there is a sense of partnership within the JEEPSG. Both Unions have expressed confidence in the process and feel reassured that the Council has adopted the right approach.
- GMB regional representative has been very complimentary about the degree of progress made by the HR team in completing the initial stages of the project.

Job Evaluation Training for JE Panellists

12. To date, four x 2 day training sessions have been arranged (Aug, Oct, Nov and Dec) for staff, union representatives and HR/Payroll team members. Initial take up was slow but the Nov and Dec sessions will be fully booked. Training for evaluation panellists is being provided by Graham Thurston, Project HR, who is the Council's consultant for this project. All sessions have been offered to the trade unions and both regional and local representatives have been encouraged to attend. By end of the December session, approx 25 staff representatives from across SCDC and 9 union representatives (UNISON & GMB) will have been trained. This number may increase as further sessions are made available.

Communications

13. Considerable attention has been paid to ensuring that regular updates and project information are made available to staff. The Communications Officer, Kaye Coleman-Rooney has supported the project by producing monthly updates and briefings. Insite, Scene, noticeboards, core brief and CX briefing have been used in the communication process.

Union Consultation

14. The Council and both trade unions have committed to a partnership approach to this project. The JEEPSG group are currently working on "Local Conventions" and "Protocols and Guidance" for JE panels. The aim of obtaining consensus on the draft documents at JE Steering group of 4.11.08 has been achieved. These are "live" documents that will be amended and adapted as project progresses.

Job Evaluation and Equal Pay Steering Group

15. There has been initial agreement to meet monthly (commencing 4th November 2008) now that JE project is fully underway. This ensures regular communication, co-operation and joint working with the unions throughout project.

Job Evaluation Panels

16. Agreement was reached with the trade unions, at the JEEPSG meeting on 4th November, that the evaluation panels will be held on a weekly basis, held jointly with the unions, commencing on 12th November 2009. The composition of the panel will be one union representative (alternating between GMB and UNISON), one staff member and a HR Chair/notetaker.

Risks and Issues

17. A Risk Log forms part of the project documentation (**Appendix 2**). Key areas that require monitoring are:
 - Outcomes and recommendations from Employment Tribunal/Court of Appeal cases in relation to Equal Pay Claims
 - Actions of no-win no fee solicitors in relation to Equal Pay claims.
 - Communication of project is vital to employee engagement and ultimate acceptance of outcomes, if communication support is reduced or withdrawn this will adversely impact upon success of project.
 - The impact of a Housing Transfer – this will impact on HR resources in terms of support to the project.
18. An issue which may impact on the progress of the project is the slow return of fully verified JDQ's from managers. There needs to be sufficient flow of completed and signed JDQ's to feed into the evaluation panels. This has been highlighted to Service Heads and line managers.

Conclusion

19. The Job Evaluation and Equal Pay project is a partnership between the Council, trade unions and employees. Joint working and communication are key elements and will integral to the success of the project.
20. The project plan, associated documents and evaluation methodology have been jointly agreed between the unions and Council. Joint meetings will continue to be held for the duration of the project.
21. To date, positive feedback has been received from employees who have been interviewed as part of the JDQ exercise.
22. The project is on target for completion in 2010.

Recommendations

23. That the Portfolio Holder:
 - a) Notes the content of the report

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

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