

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Staffing Portfolio Holder

12 March 2009

**AUTHOR/S:** Job Analyst

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### **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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 agreed with the unions. A copy of the Project Plan is at **Appendix 1**

## The position so far

10. Five tranches of jobholders have been identified. See table below for information on the number of jobholders 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	29
Second	Completed in mid November	36	79	18
Third	Completed end of January 09	34	43	10
Fourth	Started early February 09 – complete late March / early April	42	46	N/a
Fifth	Jobs and jobholders currently being selected – due to start April – complete late May			
<b>Totals</b>	Predicted - By end of March 09	156	427	57

## 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 have been covered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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. Graham Thurston, Project HR, provided training for evaluation panellists over four x 2 day sessions. To date 26 staff representatives from across SCDC and 5 union representatives (UNISON & GMB) have been trained.

### **Communications**

13. Considerable attention has been paid to ensuring that regular updates and project information are made available to staff, including half yearly project update letters sent to all 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. Recently a "street fair" display denoting the projects progress has been on display at Cambourne Offices. A newsletter containing the information from the display is being produced and will be sent to staff at Waterbeach depot and the sheltered housing complexes.

### **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 agreement to meet monthly 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. The evaluation panels are held on a weekly basis. The composition of the panel will be one union representative (alternating between GMB and UNISON), one staff member and a HR Chair/notetaker. To date **14** panels have been held and **47** jobs evaluated.

### **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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