

URGENT DECISION

of Councillor Peak and Councillor Canniford, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee, in consultation with the Town Clerk.

Review of Pay, Recruitment and Cost of Living

Reports to the Personnel Committee on the 9th March and 13th July explained the worsening difficulties experienced by the council as an employer with recruitment, inflation, impacts of real living wage and the cost of living crisis. Guidance was sought from members as to possible approaches ahead of the annual staff review in October 2022.

Members were mindful that the council was accountable to the rate payers. It was however noted that there were many jobs available offering more money, with less responsibility and offering more progression and that the council was at risk of not retaining staff at grade JG 3&4 level. Job evaluation, double banding, one off payments to staff to help with the cost of living crisis, and other incentives and benefits, such as training opportunities, free parking and discounts to services, were considered. It was suggested that North Somerset Council could undertake a 'desktop' job evaluation exercise for the town council given that both councils use the same pay scale and grades.

After much debate the Committee then **resolved**:

1. To consider double banding the pay grading structure at the annual staff review (October) and budget setting process (December).
2. To enquire whether officers of NSC could undertake a lighter 'desktop exercise' rather than full JE to evaluate town council gradings.
3. To explore other incentives such as a one off payment to staff in recognition for their service to help with the cost of living crisis, discounts on services, training opportunities.

A member suggested that North Somerset Council could carry out a 'desktop' job evaluation exercise for the town council. Job evaluation determines the relative quality of jobs within an organisation and provided a rational basis for the design and maintenance of a fair and defensible grading structure. It assesses the demands of a job and determine the relative value between one role and another. It is a complex process and a specialist consultant has to be used and can take time.

Accordingly I have since made contact with North Somerset Council and they are willing to undertake a job evaluation (JE) exercise for the town council.

A proposal has been made by North Somerset Council setting out how they would undertake the job evaluation, how it would work and the timescale. The cost of the JE exercise is estimated at £9,000 although there could be some variation depending on circumstances. The estimate is based on 30 different 'jobs' to evaluate and in fact the council has 34. This sum can be funded from the strategic planning/professional fees budget.

The JE exercise will give all town council jobs a 'score' which they will compare with similarly scored jobs at North Somerset Council. We will then be able to identify what scale point and grade each job would be at NSC. There is likely to be some overall increase in employment costs but this should assist with recruitment to currently 'difficult to recruit' posts. Also the score is likely to result in differing grades for jobs which are currently similarly graded but will recognize varying actual levels of responsibility in a way that the current pay structure does not and will be objective and defensible.

This matter is urgent because Job Evaluation, if done, needs to be done in time for the annual 2022 Staff Review towards the end of October, and then the budget preparation in November ready for Policy and Finance Committee in early December 2022 to recommend a budget to the Town Council. Accordingly confirmation needs to be given now to North Somerset's HR team to go ahead and undertake a job evaluation exercise in October 2022.

DECISION

Under the Town Council's Scheme of Delegation paragraph 2 "Chairman's Action" we as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee in consultation with the Town Clerk **AGREE** to instruct North Somerset Council's HR team to undertake job evaluation of all the town council's posts, at a cost currently estimated at approx. £9,000.

Signed **A Peak** (Chairman)

Signed **M Canniford** (Vice-Chairman)

Signed **M L Nicholson** (Town Clerk)

Date 13th September 2022