

report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 21 October 2010

agenda item number **7(a)ix**

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PERSONNEL AND PERFORMANCE

PERSONNEL

1. Purpose of the report

This report seeks to update Members on various issues relating to the Personnel and Performance portfolio.

2. Implementation of the pay strategy

As I confirmed in my report last month, the final signing event to deal with the outstanding payments for back pay from the first phase of job evaluation will be held on 28 October 2010.

The evaluation of school support staff is now well underway and since my last report further work has been undertaken to clarify the overall anticipated numbers of profile returns. In addition many schools have now submitted further information. As a result we have now received over 71% of the expected returns.

Following the previous work undertaken with schools, a further reminder has been sent to those schools which have not yet returned any profile matching information, this has resulted in some targeted support being provided to some of those schools where they have been experiencing difficulties for a variety of reasons. It is anticipated that this will result in the majority of information being returned from schools by half term.

Work on the actual evaluation of jobs is now progressing well and over 800 jobs have already been through the first stage of the moderation process. It is anticipated that the process will be completed in time for publication of scores in January 2011.

Discussions are progressing with the trade unions on the issue of back pay and equal pay liability

3. Proposed changes to employment policies and terms and conditions of employment

Payment of the agreed buy out for essential car users was made in September. Finalisation of information for all other authorised car users has taken a little longer to complete but it is intended that these payments will be made in October and November.

4. Voluntary redundancy exercise

The deadline for expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy was extended until 24th September following the publication of the section 188 notice in relation to senior and middle management posts.

Initial analysis of the responses received to date has now been undertaken. Currently approximately 1,600 expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy have been received from employees. A further 700 responses have also been submitted. These are either requests for reduction in hours; other suggestions as to how the County Council can save money; duplicate expressions of interest etc.

Individual estimates of redundancy and pensions payments have been circulated to managers who are the subject of the section 188 notice previously issued. Individual discussions are now taking place in order to confirm whether requests for voluntary redundancy can be agreed and the timescale for this.

Wider expressions of interest from across the County Council and other responses from employees are currently being considered by managers on a case by case basis.

5. Wellbeing and Attendance Management

Data from sickness absence returns for the second quarter of 2010/11, that is 1st July to 30th September 2010, is currently being validated and updated performance figures will be published during the first week in November.

During September comprehensive guidance on completing management referrals to Occupational Health was issued to enable all managers and Headteachers to ensure that the referral form is completed fully and is clear on the type of advice required from the Occupational Health Unit. This will ensure that high quality, relevant advice is provided and help reduce overall timescales.

Illness attributed to stress and depression continues to be the single greatest cause of sickness absence across the council, accounting for 18.30% of all absences in the first quarter of 2010/11.

As part of the wider Wellbeing and Attendance Management Strategy, an Employee Wellness and Stress Management Action plan has been developed by HR to support managers in reducing and managing stress at source. This will move the council away from its traditional reactive, compliance driven, approach to stress management and support the move towards a more strategic, proactive and holistic approach at the heart of managing change and organisational development.

The action plan will both enable managers to take preventive action and provide appropriate support to their employees experiencing stress. It will also enable

employees to take responsibility for their personal wellbeing and take steps to prevent symptoms developing and to recognise and manage their own stress.

An evaluation of the impact of the “Nurse Line” pilot which was operated within both the ICT Services and Property divisions of the Corporate Services department will be available during October/November. This will be used to inform next steps.

PERFORMANCE

6. Direct Services Performance

Through regular portfolio meetings I review and monitor the overall performance of the direct services in the Communities Department.

7. Building Cleaning

Turnover for the first 5 months of the financial year is £125k ahead of target and as costs remain firmly under control the service is expected to achieve the first year of its cost recovery target of £500k .

8. Landscape Services

This service area has also increased income this year as a result of better buy back levels. In addition to the regular maintenance of grounds, a number of school and communities projects delivering improved play and grounds areas have recently been won. As a result the financial performance remains in line with targets.

9. Schools Catering

The earlier increase in meal numbers of 8% reported in June continued for the remainder of the summer term. Meal sales have now returned to the pre 2005 levels when the service nationally experienced a significant reduction the second quartile of national levels of meal take-up. Financial performance is £250k ahead of its income targets which has been achieved by targeting poorer performance schools as a result of the scrutiny exercise completed on behalf of the Education Standing Committee. With the critical only expenditure measures in place and subject to the proactive management of the above inflationary food cost pressures the service is now a position to return to a zero cost to the authority 12 months ahead of the original planned date.

10. County Hall Catering Management

With the reduction in income of internal events, turnover is now below the original budget however with a corresponding reduction in costs the service is ensuring that the overall profitability of the operation is not being compromised.

11. Highways Operations & Fleet Management

These service areas have undertaken a restructuring and reorganisation exercise and are operating inline with budgeted position and the forecast outturn is inline with target.

**CLLR ANDY STEWART
CABINET MEMBER FOR PERSONNEL AND PERFORMANCE**