

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7th April 2005

Implementation of Single Status

Joint Report by

ANNE EWING

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

and

MARK SMITH

ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITY SERVICES MANAGER

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request that Members of the Human Resources Committee approve the implementation of a Single Status package for the Council's outdoor workforce.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of implementing single status will be £30,571 (excluding on-costs), which will be found from within the totality of the budget for Environment and Amenity Services and will be derived from service efficiencies and rationalisation of working practices.

3 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

These are dealt with in the report.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

5 INTRODUCTION

Environment and Amenity Services provide the Council's outdoor services, historically referred to as 'blue collar' services. Traditionally the size of the workforce has been variable, dependant on many factors, including workload, holiday and sickness. Historically this has meant that it is very difficult to calculate the exact size and profile of the core workforce, and as such fixing an establishment has not been possible.

Another issue is the method of calculating the pay of the workforce which is further complicated by the high proportion of overtime worked. The hourly rate used to calculate overtime is based on an historical rate, and not the gross salary of the employee. This has caused a two fold problem;

- i. the employee does not earn a “fair” overtime rate,
- ii. it is extremely difficult to make realistic predictions for wages

Although technically the workforce carry out similar duties to each other, one of the anomalies of the current system is that no employee earns exactly the same amount as another.

During 2001, the Council experienced severe recruitment and retention problems with regard to Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) drivers. A report was presented to the Human Resources committee on 28th March 2002 which resulted in a new pay scheme being introduced.

Whilst the current scheme helped to overcome the difficulties experienced during 2001 it did nothing to satisfy the imperatives of Single Status. The scheme is very complicated, difficult to administer and does not come to fruition until 2008/09. With hindsight, the introduction of the scheme also complicated the budget setting process.

The outdoor workforce is employed under a different regime to officer posts with one of the main differences being the way the pay is calculated. Officers receive a salary based on the substantive grade for their job. Currently the outdoor workforce receive a wage which is made up of; basic pay, attendance allowance, market forces, skills payments, responsibility pay, and tool allowance. This is further complicated with overtime being calculated on basic pay only with attendance allowance not being paid when an employee is away from work due to sickness.

With the imperatives of single status implementation and the corporate recognition that an outdoor worker is as important to the Council as any other employee, these issues clearly need to be addressed.

6 BACKGROUND TO SINGLE STATUS

In 1995 the Employers Organisation negotiated an agreement to harmonise terms and conditions between the former Administrative, Professional Technical and Clerical staff (APT&C) and the former Manual Workers, into a single agreement – the National Joint Agreement for Local Government Staff. This agreement required that all Councils move to a thirty seven hour week, establish a job evaluation scheme that covered all these staff, and review all the terms and conditions of these staff so that the potential for discrimination, particularly in relation to equal pay were minimised.

The Council did a lot of work in the late 1990s and all staff (with the exception of some within Leisure Services) are now on a thirty seven hour week. A number of terms and conditions of employment have been reviewed and modernised. However, the issue of modernising the pay of the workforce within Environment and Amenity Services had not been undertaken nor have the Council addressed the issue of job evaluation.

In the 2004 pay review it was agreed that, in return for a three year agreement (which would give Councils some stability and an opportunity to plan ahead financially) all Councils would conduct equal pay reviews and move to a job evaluation scheme that was deemed to be non discriminatory.

It is felt that these proposed changes for the workforce within Environment and Amenity Services will move the Council a considerable way towards meeting the requirements of the national agreement. Past experience in other authorities has indicated that the overall salary budget increases by 4.5% as a result of the implementation of a job evaluation scheme.

7 PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT RETENTION SCHEME

Due to the complicated nature of the current remuneration scheme for the outdoor workforce and the fact that it does not come fully into force until 2008/09 it is clearly outdated. In addition, it also precludes the Council from satisfying the single status criteria. This gives the Council the opportunity to take the very progressive step change toward true harmonisation and single status.

8 PROPOSALS

The management have evaluated the skills requirement amongst the workforce and have devised four categories of generic established posts which cover the entire range of outdoor functions carried out by Environment and Amenity Services.

As part of the evaluation process the number of posts required in each category has been identified which has in turn produced the total workforce establishment of 67 (plus an additional 6 staff employed on temporary contracts). In determining staff numbers a typical week is envisaged, which means that occasionally peak sickness and holiday periods have not been taken into account.

Following a job evaluation process undertaken by the Human Resource Department the four categories of established posts have been developed and each has been assigned with a salary scale, these can be seen in *Figure 1* below.

Category	Number of Posts	Spinal Column Points	APT&C Scale
Non-Driver	*21	11-13	2
Driver	21	14-17	3
LGV Driver	21	18-21	4
Multi Trade 'Craft and Associated Employees'	4	18-21	4
TOTAL	67		

Figure 1

*There will be an additional 6 staff employed on temporary contracts as Scale 2 Non-Drivers (9 months) for grass cutting activities and as further cover for absences.

Individual employees will be allocated a position depending on their skills and a position being vacant within that category. Two operatives will also be designated Relief Supervisor to act up during periods of absence of the Supervisors; this additional duty will be rewarded with the payment of an honorarium.

Future progression between spinal column points (Scp's) will be by annual incremental progression until the top point within their salary scale is reached. In some grades a bar will be applied to Scp's which will require specific levels of performance and the acquisition of additional skills, experience and training to be obtained to allow progression, (**Appendix A**). Progression between grades would be on vacancy and application process. At the point of conversion to established posts, some new conditions of employment would be introduced (**Appendix B**).

9 CONSULTATION

For several years now the Council has recognised the need for a Single Status Group to meet and discuss issues around the introduction of Single Status. The Single Status Group consists of Management and Trade Union representatives and meets on a regular basis. During the development of a Single Status package for the outdoor staff within Environment and Amenity Services extensive consultation was carried out with the Trade Unions and the individual staff concerned. The consultation process culminated in a report presented by the Environment and Amenity Services Manager to the Single Status Working Group on 3rd February 2005 which set out the detail of introducing a Single Status agreement for the outdoor workforce.

The report was agreed by the Single Status Working Group on the 3rd February 2005, it was agreed that a joint report of the Head of Human Resources and the Environment and Amenity Services Manager should be presented to the Human Resource Committee on 7th April 2005.

There are four members of the workforce staff that are covered by the Joint Negotiating Committee for, 'Local Authority Craft and Associated Employees' who fall outside of the existing Single Status negotiations at national level. However, harmonisation is currently being sought at a local level to include these four employees within Kennet District Council's Single Status Scheme.

10 DETAILED FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current wages budget for 2005/06 is £1,072,100 which excludes on-costs, a further £98,000 has been agreed for additional staffing. Therefore the true existing budgets equates to £1,170,100. The new direct wage cost of introducing this scheme will be £1,200,671 before overtime and on-costs.

The consequence of implementing *Figure 1* is that overtime costs would rise as hourly rates will increase by 25% - 30% which would equate to approximately £25,500 unless service efficiencies are found that lead to a reduction in the number of overtime hours worked. The process of overtime management is under constant review.

To reduce overtime some employees shall be contracted to work thirty seven hours per week which includes weekends (this may result in future growth in the number of established posts, which will be agreed at future meetings of the Human Resources Committee subject to appropriate reports from Officers). With the introduction of a Single Status Agreement all additional payments and enhancements shall disappear and a flat rate will be paid for thirty seven hours per week, with the relevant overtime rate for hours worked over the basic contracted hours.

All of the additional costs added together equate to a cost of £30,571 (before on-costs) which represents an increase of 2.6 % on the wages budget for the outdoor staff within Environment and Amenity Services.

11 CONCLUSIONS

The single status proposals contained within this report will allow the Council to meet the single status criteria of job evaluation and harmonisation between the former, Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical staff and the former Manual Workers into a single agreement – the National Joint Agreement for Local Government Staff. This will be a very considerable advancement towards the Council fully achieving the requirements of the National Agreement.

The creation of established posts within the workforce allows for better resource management and the transparent progression through the salary grade for staff, whilst allowing the Council to clearly demonstrate that they treat their outdoor employees as they would any other employee of the Council.

12 RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED THAT the Human Resources Committee approve;

the retrospective introduction of this Single Status package commencing as from 1st April 2005, for the Councils outdoor workforce within Environment and Amenity Services.

Environment and Amenity Services Manager
MS/HR/08

Appendix A

Scale 2 - Non Driver

Scp 11 £13,458	
Scp 12 £13,737	Bar to Scp 13 gaining NVQ 1
Scp 13 £14,106	

Scale 3 - Driver

Scp 14 £14,364	
Scp 15 £14,664	Bar to Scp 16 gaining NVQ 2
Scp 16 £15,015	Bar to Scp 17 dependant on gaining HGV Licence
Scp 17 £15,372	

Scale 4 LGV Driver/Multi Trade

Scp 18 £15,675	
Scp 19 £16,260	
Scp 20 £16,854	Bar to Scp 21 dependant on ability to drive full
Scp 21 £17,469	range of LGV vehicles*

*LGV Drivers only

Workforce Additional Conditions

1. General start time for 'operational' staff will be 07:30 hrs
2. There will be flexible start and finish times, between 06:00 and 09:00 hrs and 14:00 and 22:00 hrs at the request of management.
3. The service occasionally requires working longer than a standard 37 hrs a week. Environment and Amenity operatives may be asked to work up to 48 hours in one week.
4. Bank Holiday working will be introduced during 2005 for which appropriate remuneration will be made, to provide a continuous and seamless service to the public.
5. Staff will have total responsibility for their uniform and personal protective equipment (PPE), for correct cleaning and ensuring it is fit for purpose. (KDC will continue to supply).
6. Staff shall be transferred to a monthly pay cycle.
7. Workforce to be appointed on a spinal column point within a salary scale as with Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical staff.
8. Progression between Scp will be by annual incremental advancement, however, there will be bars between certain Scp that will necessitate the acquisition of skills/training to progress beyond them.
9. Progression between scales will be based on vacancies becoming available and an application and appointment process.
10. There will be no other payments/enhancements over the Scp rate, other than overtime payments (over 37hrs per week) and standby payments.