

## Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations Arising from the Recruitment and Selection Scrutiny Panel Review

### GENERAL HR INITIATIVES

	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	IMPLEMENT BY
1	Further to the results of the staff survey, Service Unit Heads be strongly encouraged to address identified issues within their Units by producing and implementing a "fit for purpose" action plan	Units have been asked to put together action plans identifying areas for action. These have been submitted to Management Team for consideration.	Management Team	Oct 2006	October 2007 (agreed communication strategy in place by next staff survey)
2	Results of the Staff Survey be communicated with all employees throughout the Council	Process already begun via Unit Team Meetings. Formal communication mechanisms to be explored and agreed (see action under retention initiatives, para 3)	Management Team and Head of POD	As above	As above
3	The need for People and Organisational Development Services to balance its strategic and visionary roles, and the operational demands imposed upon it by personnel systems and processes be recognised	POD Team meet regularly to discuss input at operational and strategic level, and to agree priorities. Local team action plans identify systems and processes which need to be reviewed.	Head of POD	Ongoing	Ongoing
4	Review retirement arrangements to encourage older staff to stay on in a flexible capacity that does not affect final pension payments and utilises new flexible pensions provisions. This will also promote use of experienced workers to mentor less experienced members of staff	Employee Relations Team to propose Flexible Retirement Policy for consultation and agreement.	ER Team	February 2007	Summer 2007
5	Undertake further work to demonstrate the Council's commitment to gender equality issues e.g. by highlighting the Council's flexible working policies. This could partially be achieved with the inclusion of a note at the end of all advertisements (including senior management roles) stating that applications from potential job sharers or other flexible working requests will be welcomed.	Recruitment Team to enhance advertising/recruitment materials in a way which promotes gender equality  ER Team to carry out Equal Pay Audit to capture and action any issues arising in relation to gender equality  Equalities impact assessments to be carried out on existing HR policies which are amended, and new policies introduced to highlight gender and other equality issues.	POD Team	Ongoing	Ongoing

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**GENERAL INITIATIVES CONTINUED ...**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>BY WHOM</b>	<b>BY WHEN</b>	<b>IMPLEMENT BY</b>
6	The intranet to be updated with the inclusion of a simple, easy to use and accessible Personnel Folder for managers and staff.	The POD Team to work in liaison with the Intranet Development Group to develop site content which is easily accessible and user friendly. First stages will be complete by September 2006.	HR Information Co-ordinator to lead with input from POD Team	Ongoing	Ongoing
7	Full advantage be taken of the opportunities provided by Office Centralisation to pilot new schemes such as home/flexible/mobile working.	Work already underway. Extensive campaign to promote flexible ways of working has been launched. Now in process of working with Units to embed principles and support new working patterns.  Decant will provide a platform for units to explore hot-desking	Workforce Planning Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing (Report on progress due to go to Innovative Ways of Working Group in Oct 06)

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### RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	IMPLEMENT BY
1	Following recent feedback from the IIP Assessor, attendance at the one day induction is now mandatory for all employees, including those on fixed-term contracts or temporary staff. All managers, supervisors and team leaders be strongly encouraged to release staff so that they may attend the induction day within the first month of their employment with the Council	Recent survey of new starters indicated that 88% of new starters attended the one day induction. Temporary staff and those on fixed-term contracts are invited to this event. The induction process has recently been reviewed. The Training Officer is currently devising a new programme. This will be communicated to managers, supervisors and team leaders alike. A register will be kept of those who have attended to monitor uptake.	Training Officer	Dec 2006	Mar 2007
2	The initial one to one interview with new members of staff should be held within the first three months of a new member of staff commencing work. This interview and the formal probationary interview at six months should both have regard to the key staff development appraisal criteria and competency themes.	Importance of three and six month probationary meetings to be emphasised to line managers and team leaders.  Guidance to be produced to assist with the process	Training Officer/WFP Manager	Dec 2006	Mar 2007
3	Improvements to the vacancy facility on the Council's website be pursued as a matter of priority. Potential options include a) outsourcing this section of the website to an external company b) sharing a vacancy webpage with other Wiltshire local authorities c) maintaining the site inhouse	Shared Service discussions may provide future opportunities for joint working on internet advertising and other recruitment initiatives.  Recruitment Team have been working closely with IT to maintain online facility, and will continue to do so.  Outsourcing suggestion will be referred to the Head of IT for further discussion with Management Team	Recruitment Officers	Ongoing	Ongoing
4	Diversity has been promoted through the monitoring of the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy statistics, however, the perception of Salisbury District Council as a diverse employer needs to be promoted further e.g. via Link-Up, the Bulletin and Press Releases	Opportunities for promotion to be explored via the Diversity Working Group  Recommendations in 'Fairness and Equality at Work' paper be followed up	Workforce Planning Manager	Sept 2006	Jan 2007

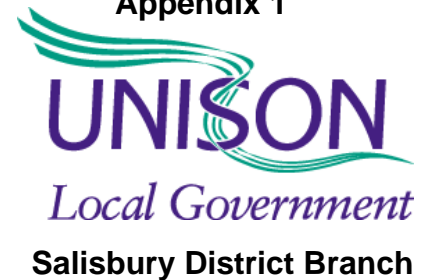
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5	The Training Manager investigate the feasibility of SDC achieving the use of the “two ticks” disability symbol, which would help to attract disabled applicants	Policy for the Employment of People with Disabilities is now in draft and about to be consulted. This would support the application for the two tick symbol. Application process is currently being investigated.	Workforce Planning Manager	Mar 2007	TBC
6	The possibility of offering apprenticeships to 16 – 24 year olds be investigated further	Recruitment Officer to investigate feasibility	Recruitment Officer	Mar 2007	Dependent on feasibility
7	Investigate the National Graduate Development Programme or the Graduate Opportunities into Local Government Database	Recruitment Officer to investigate feasibility	Recruitment Officer	Mar 2007	Dependent on feasibility
8	Investigate best practice initiatives employed by other local authorities in order to improve the Council’s BVPI (11a), i.e. the top 5% of earners within the workforce who are women	Issue to be investigated as part of Equal Pay Audit	Training Officer	Dec 2006	Dependent on findings
9	More work be undertaken in relation to promoting the benefits of working for the Council, such as flexible working/family friendly policies	Recruitment literature is currently under review. Benefits are to be promoted in advertisements and within the literature that will be produced. Internet to be developed to encompass section on benefits of us as an employer.	Recruitment Team	Dec 2006	Jan 2007

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### RETENTION INITIATIVES

	RECOMMENDATION	ACTION	BY WHOM	REVIEW BY	IMPLEMENT BY
1	To extend the career framework across a number of units where the influence of external market forces supplements can impact on the retention of key staff	To review existing career frameworks and develop them in conjunction with existing core competencies and the developmental framework.	WFP/ Training Manager	March 2007	October 2007 (in line with dev framework implementation)
2	Workforce Planning Manager to continue work in relation to work life balance and succession planning	Work ongoing in supporting the implementation of various flexible working options across the organisation. Better monitoring of workforce data beginning to take shape, the outcomes of which will assist in informing future workforce decisions.	WFP Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing
3	Consideration be given to the need to follow up the Staff Survey results with staff focus groups either when the results of the surveys are known or in the interim year.	Detailed analysis and presentation of results is provided as soon as possible following the survey. Units have been asked to submit individual action plans tackling main themes. Action to be taken in agreeing how results are communicated.	Head of POD	Oct 2006	October 2007 (agreed communication strategy in place by next staff survey)
4	Service Unit Heads be encouraged to share examples of best practice within their services with other Unit Heads and Managers throughout the Council	Integral part of the POD unit's work is to encourage and facilitate best practice in relation to HR issues across all Service Units. POD staff are often pivotal in providing examples which units can share. This work is to continue.	POD Team	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	Additional work be undertaken in relation to exit interviews (i.e. an increase in data analysis), but with regard to the resource implications for the Recruitment and Retention Team.	New P/T Recruitment and Retention Officer to investigate appropriate methods of data collection, analysis and reporting of exit/turnover information	R&R Officer	Dec 2006	March 2007



July 2006

## **Scrutiny Panel Review of Staff Recruitment and Retention Amended version**

Thank you for the opportunity for UNISON to make a submission on the report in front of your Panel. The union wishes to work with the Council in its efforts, to quote Councillor Tomlinson, to become or continue to be “an employer of which its employees can be proud” and we welcome the comment that the Council’s employees are its greatest asset. I believe that the report highlights most of the main issues correctly and makes many constructive recommendations and wish to make a number of comments on the issue raised.

### *Retention of staff*

UNISON have requested that a flexible retirement policy be developed and our view is that this needs to be developed in the context of upcoming changes to the pension scheme.

The union strongly agrees with the working group’s comments about equality and diversity issues and we agree that the Council needs to do more in this field. Indeed UNISON, TGWU and Personnel are already working on an equal pay audit which is looking at where there may be equality issues in terms of pay and grade and making recommendations for action. This includes looking at current practice on the payment of a ‘market forces supplement’ which is used to attract and retain certain employees in certain posts where there is a competitive market for skills. We are investigating whether the system is working within the remit of ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. UNISON believes that the Council can and should do more in terms of addressing any equalities balance problems using lawful positive action measures. For example by targeting training and development to ensure that any ‘glass ceiling’ in terms of women’s promotional opportunities is overcome. More also needs to be done to enable greater recruitment and retention of people who declare themselves as disabled.

We agree that a lot has been done within the Council to improve the support for staff training and the unions are working with the Training Unit. In terms of work-life balance and innovative ways of working UNISON is also keen to work with the Council to ensure staff feel comfortable in their working environment and work in ways that maximise their productivity and balance between home and work. To this end we also believe that the Council’s flexi-time policy needs to be updated and amended and Personnel have recognised this. The union is keen to work with the Council in offering staff a wider range of choices of working patterns to accommodate their needs.

UNISON supports office centralisation because the current work environment is a positive disincentive to work for Salisbury District Council. If this were allowed to continue for much

longer we would have serious concerns about staff health, safety and welfare. There are many challenges ahead for staff in the decant and move into new offices however there are many opportunities as the report highlights. We are unaware whether the Council has mapped the home locations of it's staff but expect that a move out of Salisbury would cause even more significant recruitment and retention issues which would impact on costs and service delivery.

The report recommends further work on exit interviews and we believe this is one significant area where the Council could indeed be taking more action. We are aware that the Council gather some information however the report correctly says that there are gaps in the current information available. Whilst some of the information is private and confidential in nature the Council could and should be more actively reporting on the reasons why people are leaving and taking action as appropriate. For example are people leaving to join another local authority or private sector organisation and why? Are they leaving for better pay or promotion? Are they leaving because there were problems at work, for example stress or bullying, and how does the Council deal with such problems or are they just ignored and left to fester for remaining staff? Why do some individuals choose to leave and rather than make a claim using dignity at work or grievance procedures whilst employed?

### *Recruitment*

UNISON supports efforts to bring in new employees and 'grow our own' officers through apprenticeship schemes or other forms of training.

### *Medium Term Financial Strategy*

Whilst we note that this report has focused on processes and procedures with regards to recruitment and retention of staff it is impossible for this union to view this issue in isolation without talking about the context. There are some important matters which this report does not address with regards to the economic climate of the Council and staff conditions.

### *Security of Employment and Redundancy*

There are some people who are forced to leave the Council who would rather remain for no fault of their own. UNISON is concerned that the threat of compulsory redundancies may be rising. For example there were four redundancies at the last Full Council. The Council's 'security of employment' policy is progressive in terms of commitments to attempt to avoid redundancy however too often when a redundancy is identified we are still losing people from employment in the Council rather than retaining their experience and skills. Some may try and pin some blame on the individual for not being flexible enough when presented with other opportunities however no employee presented with redundancy in the last few years has turned down 'suitable alternative employment' (a legal term which says that the offer of a new job should be similar in terms of grade, location, skills and duties). One cannot force an employee into a job which is not appropriate and it is unreasonable to expect this. In UNISON's view the Council, if it genuinely wishes to avoid losing staff through redundancy, must be more flexible when developing it's restructuring plans and more flexible in it's offers of alternative jobs. Whilst we accept that the priority has to be service delivery there is more that can be done in terms of the ways units are structured to avoid displacing employees. More can be done to retain them if that is unavoidable, whether in terms of working hours, retraining or duties of alternative jobs. This takes an organisational and managerial commitment not just a policy commitment.

### *Increasing pressure, stress and unfilled vacancies*

UNISON understands that in some areas of the Council vacancies are not being filled to enable the Council to cope with its financial pressures. We are concerned that the impact of these unfilled vacancies is that existing staff face growing pressure of work. There are also other savings identified in the MFTS which are putting more pressure on resources and this has a consequent impact on staff who are aiming to achieve continuous improvement of services. Unless management and the public accept lower standards of service delivery little pressure is removed from individual officers struggling with a greater workload. This can lead to stress and consequent increased sickness absence. We may end up losing staff under the Council's sickness absence procedures as a result.

### *Enhanced pay for unsocial hours working*

The potential impact on recruitment and retention of staff in key frontline 'out of hours' services, should the Council implement changes to staff terms and conditions of employment, should not be underestimated. Even if changes are agreed with the union following negotiations there is likely, in our opinion, to be a negative impact on employees and a consequent impact on services. We are in a full employment environment here in Salisbury and if it becomes economically less advantageous for people to work in services outside of core working hours, for example at nights, then the Council will find it hard staffing those key services. Staff morale will also suffer in those areas from having to take a reduction in pay.

### *Travel and parking*

Finally we are concerned about the impact of the introduction of the Council's new travel and parking arrangements for its staff and the way in which this policy has been implemented. The changes to the free parking arrangements have been agreed with the unions and we are willing to work with the Council on 'green' travel measures. However the Council should face the fact that employment with the Council has become less attractive as a result of these changes. A major staff entitlement has been removed and not been completely replaced with another. Staff are also not convinced as to the elected Members commitment to their own policies in this area and this impacts on morale. If the Council wants to enable its employees to move away from the car there is more in our opinion that could have been done around public transport and there is absolutely no incentive now for someone who lives within the city boundaries whereas prior to 2000 one received free city centre parking. The Council is facing operational issues with regards to those who require access to a car occasionally for work, so called 'casual users'. The Council committed in the new Green Travel Plan to ensuring that these staff would not have to use their personal cars for work purposes but could access pool cars. However future proposals to change parking and travel arrangements for those who regularly require their car for work, 'essential users', may also impact on staff recruitment and retention.

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