

Title: **Presentation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee**

Chairman of Scrutiny Committee: **Cllr Ernie Clark**

Reporting Officer: **Marie Lindsay, Policy Officer**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee concerning the Wiltshire Council appointments process and the level of uncertainty that still exists for West Wiltshire District Council staff

Background

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 February 2009 Members considered a report providing an update on the work of the County Council's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board. During the discussions Members expressed concern about the uncertainty that still faces those West Wiltshire District Council staff who have not had their position within the new Wiltshire Council confirmed.

In December 2008 all staff across the five councils received one of three letters either giving them ownership of a post, advising them that they would be ringfenced for a post or that their position was as yet unknown. It was reported at the time by the County Council that approximately 20% of staff across Wiltshire had received a 'not known' letter. Members of the Scrutiny Committee expressed concern that having spoken to a number of staff at West Wiltshire it seemed to be the case that the number of district staff whose position is still unknown may be considerably higher than the stated county-wide figure of around 20%.

Main issues

In December 2008 the County Council stated that the total number of staff across the county receiving each of the notification letters was as follows:

- Ownership of a post – 77.96%
- Ringfenced – 0.18%
- Not known – 21.86% (a total of 602 staff)

The specific figures for West Wiltshire District Council staff were:

- Ownership – 69% (140 staff)
- Not known – 31% (63 staff)

Whilst there does exist a larger number of staff at the district who received a 'not known' letter this could be explained by a number of factors.

Firstly, West Wiltshire employs a high proportion of temporary staff - as at 31 January 2009 there were 41 temporary staff and 30 agency staff employed. Letters were only issued to permanent staff and the perceived levels of uncertainty may have been affected

by the additional concerns of temporary staff. Secondly, many more ownership letters were issued at the other District councils where services such as refuse, grounds maintenance, street cleansing and leisure haven't been outsourced and in which services the vast majority of staff received ownership letters.

The position is changing on a daily basis and since the letters were issued in December there have been at least 8 permanent employees of West Wiltshire District Council who have had their position confirmed. This has been by either the successful appointment to a new job at the County Council, receiving an ownership letter or receiving a 'not matched' letter advising them that they will be placed in the redeployment pool.

Effects on strategies and codes

There are no direct implications from this report on strategies and codes.

Risk management implications

The ongoing uncertainty faced by staff presents a risk to the Council in terms of service provision.

Finance and performance implications

There may be implications for the performance of the Council caused by a reduction in staff morale.

Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee as follows:

- To note the Scrutiny Committee's concerns about the continued uncertainty facing West Wiltshire District Council staff and to request an update on the latest position at the beginning of March.

Background papers

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board update report to the Scrutiny Committee 11 February 2009