

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

3 FEBRUARY 2021

Report Title	Future Northants Corporate Work stream – Human Resources Delegation of responsibility to the Head of Paid Service for employment matters.
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Appendix A – List of Day 1 Employment Policies

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive to delegate responsibility for the negotiation of Day 1 employee pay arrangements, terms and conditions and employment policies to the Head of Paid Service.
- 1.2 The report also provides a brief update on the work that has been completed to date.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:

- 2.1 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid of Service to negotiate with the Council's recognised Trade Unions regarding "Day One Terms and Conditions" (including pay);
- 2.2 Note that the finalised "Day One Terms and Conditions and associated financial considerations shall be considered by the Shadow Executive Committee in late March 2021(excluding those relating to the Chief Officers);
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve the employment policies listed in Appendix A to this report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council has terms and conditions of employment and necessary policies in place for the 1st April 2021 to enable it to recruit and manage staff.

4. Background

- 4.1 On 1 April 2021, approximately 3300 directly employed sovereign council employees will transfer into North Northamptonshire Council (NNC).
- 4.2 The new Council will also need to ensure that it is able to recruit new starters to fill vacancies in the workforce from Day One and allow for transformation. In order to do this, the Council will need to ensure that it has an agreed set of pay arrangements and contractual terms and conditions of employment. These are referred to as "Day One Terms and Conditions". This does not include the pay and terms and conditions applicable to the Head of Paid Service and Chief Officers, which where applicable is governed by the Pay Policy agreed by Council and is otherwise a function of the Executive.
- 4.3 Work is already underway with regards to negotiation with our recognised trade unions; with a view to reaching a collective agreement to Day One Terms and Conditions from 1 April 2021. These Negotiation meetings commenced at the end of last year and are now held on a weekly basis with the Head of Paid Service, recognised trade unions and HR officers supporting this workstream.
- 4.4 In addition to negotiating new pay and conditions, the Council will also need to ensure that it has clear and transparent employment policies and procedures in place to manage and support its' workforce. These HR policies provide written guidance for employees and managers on how to handle a range of employment issues; including areas such as performance management, sickness absence, how to raise concerns and how to deal with organisational change. All sovereign councils currently have a suite of workforce related policies; and although legally compliant, there are a number of operational variations between them. Moving forward, it is not viable or practical for employees and managers to try and navigate several different versions of a certain policy; as this would be inefficient and likely to lead to challenges due to inconsistent application.
- 4.5 The HR workstream, which sits within the Corporate Programme, is currently developing a set of common employment policies and procedures for North Northamptonshire Council. A list of priority employment policies that are being developed for Day One can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.6 High level policy principles have been discussed at a series of policy working groups (these have been operating on a regular basis since the end of July

2020). These groups include trade unions representatives and HR colleagues from across the sovereign councils.

- 4.7 A number of draft priority policies have now been developed and are being formally consulted on with the trade unions for their feedback.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the Shadow Executive Committee agreeing the recommendations in this paper, it is proposed that the draft employment policies are approved by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 5.2 There is a relatively short period of time until vesting day and the Corporate Leadership Team meet on a regular basis which will allow time to agree the HR policies that will be adopted to manage the workforce.
- 5.3 The exception to this will be the North Northamptonshire Pay Policy Statement; which must be approved by Full Council and will need to go to the Shadow Authority meeting in February 2021.
- 5.4 The Head of Paid Service will continue to ensure that Shadow Executive members are kept apprised of the progress of the pay and conditions negotiations with the trade unions following which a formal recommendation paper regarding Day One Terms and Conditions, including financial considerations, shall be presented to the Shadow Executive in late February / early March 2021.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Financial and other Resources and Risk

- 6.1.1 The absence of Day One Terms and Conditions presents a risk to the Council in terms of its ability to recruit new employees and deliver transformation; particularly in critical roles and those roles that require specialist skills and knowledge.
- 6.1.2 Similarly, there is an increased risk of potential employment claims and challenges from the workforce if policies and procedures are inconsistent. These can be costly both in monetary terms and also on resources, as managers have to allocate time to resolve issues and concerns that could have been avoided with a clear and open policy and procedure.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 Under the Structural Changes Order all matters which are not reserved specifically by legislation to the full Shadow Authority are matters for the Executive Committee. Staff matters would usually be non-executive but during transition fall to the Executive to decide. This is to enable the number



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of decisions required to deliver effective transition to be made. The Head of Paid Service already has powers directly from statute to set out to members the arrangements and number of staff required under s4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These delegations are therefore consistent with the transitional legal framework.

6.2.2 The requirement for Full Council to approve the Council's pay policy statement is set out in the Localism Act, 2011.

6.3 Equality and Health

6.3.1 Transparent pay arrangements and employment policies and procedures that are applicable to all employees support a more inclusive and equitable culture and approach; as they set clear parameters on the 'what' and the 'how' to manage workforce matters in a consistent way.