

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE  
24 MARCH 2009

### REVIEW OF THE NJC JOB EVALUATION SCHEME

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Executive of the progress on an independent review of the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme, as adopted in 2000.

#### 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Local Government Employers have been working with the Council to conduct an independent audit of the NJC Job Evaluation scheme to ensure that it has been and continues to be applied consistently, that it follows good practice, and remains robust enough to meet the Council's present requirements. This review has included:

- A review of the current procedures, and processes in terms of good practice, equality and transparency.
- Undertaking a check on the application of the scheme for consistency by examining the distribution of the scoring profile and looking at a number of sample posts.

#### 3. The NJC Job Evaluation Scheme

- 3.1 The national scheme was developed by a Job Evaluation Joint Technical Group established by the National Employers and unions during the Single Status negotiations. In designing and developing the scheme the group applied the Green Book principles of equality, transparency, openness and joint working. The scheme has 13 factors:

- Mental skills
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Physical skills initiative and independence
- Physical demands
- Mental demands
- Emotional demands
- Responsibility for people
- Responsibility for supervision/direction/co-ordination of employees
- Responsibility for financial resources
- Responsibility for physical resources
- Working conditions

- 3.2 Each factor is defined as having different levels. These vary between 5 and 8 levels. Each level is designed to reflect increasing steps in demand of the job task and responsibilities. The scheme along with the scoring and weighting matrix are readily available to all users.

3.3 The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) were consulted regularly during the development of the scheme.

#### **4. Pay Protection**

4.1 When the job evaluation and new grading scheme was introduced in the Council in 2000, protection arrangements were put in place for a period of five years at the current spinal column point. It is now generally accepted that this length of period could be challenged and would need to be defended by the Council.

4.2 These recommendations resulted in the decision at the 10 February Executive to reduce the pay protection arrangements to three years. This policy will remain under review and subject to employment legislation and employment tribunal cases will be reviewed as necessary.

#### **5. Local Conventions**

5.1 The Council as part of its implementation plan tested and established a number of local conventions. Local conventions are the local interpretations of the working of the job evaluation scheme.

5.2 From the assessment a full breadth of local conventions has been developed and used in the evaluation process including:

- Interpreting factor level definitions and applying to the Council's own posts this is illustrated in the supervision and financial factors, where both the number of employees and the sums of money have been identified and applied to the scheme.
- There is also good supportive descriptive information clarifying and interpreting the scheme i.e. accounting for and being accountable.

5.3 The local conventions are clear, precise, transparent and unambiguous which supports the application of the scheme consistently.

5.4 Where the level of definitions allow for more than one way of getting to each level for example interpersonal and communications and responsibilities for physical resources a matrix covering the local conventions may be helpful to the evaluators. However in checking these two factor scores and the local conventions applied there is a high level of consistency.

#### **6. Grading new and changed posts**

6.1 The process for evaluating new posts has been well established using a simplified job evaluation form which is then evaluated by HR who seek comments from the Head of Service and the Union on the resulting grades.

6.2 There is currently no appeal process for the outcome of the grading process, Para 4.1 Para 6 of the National Agreement refers to a model appeals procedure. The model procedure provides a nationally agreed framework for local appeals.

6.3 Part 4 of the National Agreement lists as the grounds for appeal against initial evaluations as:

- The scheme has been wrongly applied e.g. factor levels have been wrongly allocated, the evaluation panel did not follow guidance
- The job descriptions questionnaire did not provide complete information
- It is believed that an evident job is more highly graded (included to allow equal value issues to be resolved internally).

6.4 Appeal panels if regarded as an evaluation panel is likely to be of the same size and style of membership as an initial evaluation panel.

6.5 The Councils existing process involves the Head of HR and the Unison's Conditions of Service Officer, good practice recommends panels of four - two from management and two union representatives.

6.6 Increasing the numbers involved in the process would require more checks to ensure consistency but would result in the broader engagement with other managers and senior staff / trade union representatives encouraging ownership and acceptance more widely across the organisation.

## **7. Overview of Job Scores**

7.1 As part of the review each of the thirteen factors and individual levels were reviewed for distribution and compared against other similar authorities.

7.2 From the distribution chart factors have been scored consistently and reflect the distribution as was expected when taking into account the Council's interpretation of the scheme and the application of conventions.

## **8. Conclusions**

8.1 Since the inception of the scheme it has been applied consistently and the distribution of scores from the audit reflects similar sized local authorities' distribution. Consistency has also been achieved and maintained by the small number of evaluators used and the clear use of conventions.

8.2 A high standard of record keeping was evident which needs to be maintained.

8.3 The present means of evaluating posts and not providing post holders / managers to appeal scores is not fully transparent with responsibility resting with HR. The evaluation of posts is not undertaken jointly by a panel of evaluators made up of management and trade unions.

8.4 In the opinion of the Local Government Employers the scheme remains robust enough to meet the Council's needs.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 That Executive approve the following:

9.1 Establish job evaluation panels to evaluate new posts and post changes by including more representation from managers and union representatives. This will require further training and the need to monitor consistency in decision making.

9.2 Establish an appeals procedure to ensure natural justice is applied and that all decisions are agreed jointly.

- 9.3 Introduce ongoing monitoring and regular quality assurance checks of the scheme and its future application.

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

13.03.09

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None