

Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee

Subject: Current staffing issues (Standing Item)

Date: 8 June 2021

Author: Head of HR, Performance and Service Planning

1. Purpose of the Report

This is an information item highlighting to the Committee, any issues of particular interest that relate to the council's workforce.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note this report.

3. Summary of current issues

3.1 The organisation is now returning to a "new normal". In summary:

- All public meetings are again being held physically from 7 May.
- Employees based in the main council offices returned on a "skeleton staffing basis" from 17 May. The return has gone smoothly with exact staffing levels being determined by Heads of Service.
- From 21 June onwards more staff will return back into the Civic Centre although the plan is that most offices will operate an ongoing hybrid method of work for many staff. This flexibility will ensure that Covid-safe working practices can be maintained, increased levels of efficiency that were experienced in lockdown can be maintained, staff morale will be improved and pressure will be taken off on-site parking (potentially with environmental impact benefits, particularly in the summer months where home heating and lighting will be required less).

3.2 The National Employers for the NJC (the terms and conditions under which most staff of the council are employed) have made a pay and conditions offer in response to the Union Side claim of a 10% pay award for all employees plus other changes to terms including an increase to basic holiday entitlement. In summary the Employers' Side offer is:

- With effect from 1 April 2021, an increase of 1.50 per cent on all NJC pay points 1 and above
- Completion of the outstanding work of the joint Term-Time Only review group

The employers have also proposed that the NJC begins immediate exploratory discussions on three other elements of the claim, as follows:

- A national minimum agreement on homeworking policies for all councils
- An agreement on a best practice national programme of mental health support for all local authorities and school staff
- A joint review of the provisions in the Green Book for maternity / paternity / shared parental / adoption leave