

Meeting	Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee
Date	21 March 2022
Present	Councillors Aspden (Chair), D'Agorne (Vice-Chair), Hook and Kilbane

67. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare if they had any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have had in the business on the agenda.

Several Members noted that they did not have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest. However, Cllr Aspden and Cllr D'Agorne noted that he had previously contributed to the North Yorkshire Pension Fund due to their previous jobs in education. Cllr Hook also noted that she was currently on the North Yorkshire Pension Fund Board.

68. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of annexes to Agenda Item 9 on the grounds that they contained information relating to individuals and the financial affairs of particular persons. This information is classed as exempt under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as revised by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

69. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Staffing Matters and Urgency Committees held on 1 February 2022 and 15 February 2022 be approved and then signed by the Chair as a correct record.

70. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

71. Amendment to the Council's LGPS Discretionary Policy to Implement a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme

The Committee considered the proposal to amend the Council's LGPS Discretionary Policy Statement in order to comply with The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (the "LGPS Regulations"), to implement a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme (SCAVC) for employees. It was noted that the Committee had deferred a decision on the amendment to the policy at their 15 February 2022 meeting to receive additional information relating to the scheme and its provider.

Officers confirmed that they had enquired with Her Majesties Revenues and Customs (HMRC) regarding their position on the scheme. HMRC noted that they carry out pre and post tests on payroll and any concern regarding the implementation of the scheme would be confirmed following those tests. Officers did confirm however, that multiple other Councils had already joined the scheme ran by AVC Wise and HMRC had not raised concerns following tests on these Councils payrolls. Officers also provided in the report a breakdown of the grades of those currently benefiting from the Councils Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme and noted they would expect 90% of those on the current AVC to move over to the SCAVC if implemented.

The Committee thanked officers for the checks with HMRC and agreed that with officers that in the event HMRC had issues with the scheme when tests were undertaken that the scheme wouldn't be implemented. Members enquired whether the scheme would take additional monies from the LGPS from those taking out pensions in future years, officers confirmed the scheme was separate from the LGPS and it would not be affected.

Members discussed how well the scheme could support staff. It was noted that the scheme would allow staff to save additional money for retirement and would be a benefit above that of the current AVC as it would provide savings on national insurance. It was confirmed that the scheme could be accessed by any member of City of York Council staff, the only barrier to entry would be to where a payment would take an employee's pay below the national minimum wage, but noting that there is no set payment and payments are by choice of the employee. It was discussed that those who would benefit the most from the scheme would be those at higher grades who would be most able to sacrifice current salaries, this was discussed in relation to the current breakdown of grades of those who accessed the Council's current AVC, as it was noted that, the percentage of staff in each grade accessing the current AVC was higher for those at higher grades.

The Committee voted 3 in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr Kilbane) to amend Council policy to read 'The Council will exercise discretion to allow Local Government Pension Scheme Members to contribute to a shared cost salary sacrifice scheme additional voluntary contribution (SSSCAVC) scheme. The amount of these employer Shared Cost AVC contributions will not exceed the amount of salary sacrificed by the employee. This is a Council discretion which is subject to the employee meeting the Council's conditions for acceptance into the salary sacrifice Shared Cost AVC scheme and may be withdrawn or changed at any time. The Council will not enter into any other form of shared cost AVC.'

Resolved:

- i. To amend Council policy to read 'The Council will exercise discretion to allow Local Government Pension Scheme Members to contribute to a shared cost salary sacrifice scheme additional voluntary contribution (SSSCAVC) scheme. The amount of these employer Shared Cost AVC contributions will not exceed the amount of salary sacrificed by the employee. This is a Council discretion which is subject to the employee meeting the Council's conditions for acceptance into the salary sacrifice Shared Cost AVC scheme and may be withdrawn or changed at any time. The Council will not enter into any other form of shared cost AVC.'

Reason: To provide City of York Council staff access to the new SSSCAVC scheme.

72. Retention Payments

The Committee considered the review of the use of retention payments by the Council. It was confirmed that in the last quarter two applications had been approved. Members enquired why the grade 12 post was scheduled to be reviewed in 12 months, while those in grades 9, 6, and 5 were set at 6 months. Officers noted that the grade 9, 6, and 5 posts were part of one application that had a number of interventions in place to be reviewed, while the grade 12 post was in social care which the Council had longer term staffing challenges in, therefore it was adjudged that a review in 12 months was sufficient. Members enquired about the cost the retentions and it was noted that this was not currently available in the report but could be shared with Members after the meeting.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the number of retention payments made in the last quarter.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of the number of payments made.

73. Work Plan

The Committee considered their work plan for 2021/22 and noted that they may have a Chief Officer appointment to consider at the 25 April 2022 Committee meeting.

Resolved:

- i. That the Committee work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure the Committee maintains a program of work for 2021-22.

74. Redundancy, Pension or Exit Discretion

Members considered a report which advised them of expenditure associated with pension or exit discretions. An overview of expenditure was provided in the table at paragraph 5 of the report. There were total costs to the council of £23,591.09. Full details were set out in exempt Annex A to the report.

Resolved:

- i. Noted the expenditure associated with each proposal as detailed in the annexes.

Reason: In order to provide an overview of expenditure.

Note: the above item was considered in private session, in accordance with the decision in Minute 74.

Cllr Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.38 pm and finished at 6.00 pm].