

AGENDA ITEM No 5

BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE
8TH JANUARY 2019
BRIEFING NOTE

TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL PAY & GRADING
CHANGES CONSEQUENTIAL ON REVISED NATIONAL PAYSCALES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2019/20 Local Authority Pay Scales as approved by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services are appended (as annotated to show impacts on TTC pay grades) following agreement¹ nationally between the employer and staff sides on a new scale of spinal column points (scp's) running from scp 1 – scp 43 (Appendix 1). Prior to the agreement (2018/19 and before) these extended from scp's 6–49 (1-6 having previously been deleted (see para 1.3 below)).
- 1.2 This report is therefore to illustrate the practical effect of incorporating the revised arrangements into the Tavistock Town Council (TTC) local pay and grading structure and has been reviewed by South West Councils.
- 1.3 By way of context, because of the impact of progressive increases in the National Living Wage by Government in recent years it is has been necessary to review these arrangements nationally so as to:
- remove those which now fall below the national living wage;
 - reconfigure (consolidate) the remaining scp's.

2. CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 The significance of the latter bullet point above is that
- in some cases there may now no longer be a direct correlation between a spinal column point and a locally determined pay grade boundary. The appended schedule shows areas where for example a new scp spans two grades;

¹ Negotiations around which acknowledged that the potential for overlapping grades did arise and that, in the circumstances attaching to the consolidation exercise, this was acceptable in securing the goal of a general incremental value of iro2% which would enable a return to non-differentiated future settlements.

- likewise grades themselves have flexed eg old grade 2 covered a range of 4scp's (now depending on methodology used 1, 2 or 3); alternatively TTC local grade 5 has become extended from 4scp's to 7. This impacts in terms of equity insofar as it potentially relates to the number of years it takes a newly appointed staff member to progress (subject to satisfactory performance) to the 'fully competent' scp level indicated by payment at top of grade.

2.2 This gives rise to three potential implications which require to be addressed, namely:-

- a. How existing posts with grades on the existing scale of spinal column points 'translate' across into the new scale without inappropriately advantaging or disadvantaging post holders (or prejudicing the integrity of the organisational job evaluation scheme);
- b. Whether any "in-scale" adjustments are necessary in order to provide greater consistency in terms of the number of scp's within each scale;
- c. The treatment of any 'new' scp which does not readily map from the old arrangement.

3. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

3.1 The options available in respect of the above issues broadly fall into the following categories, namely:

Translation of Old Grades to New Spinal Column Points

- a. Treatment of 'overlap scp's', - within the TTC local pay and grading structure areas requiring attention are those found at the top of grade 1/bottom of grade 2 (new scp 3) and top of grade 2 and bottom of grade 3 (new scp 5). In each of these cases it is evident that the "old" spinal column points at the top and bottom of the respective grades merge into a single spinal column point under the new grading structure.

In other words there is a decision to be made as to whether or not:-

- The lower graded post extends exclusively, jointly or not at all into the new scp (3 or 5 as appropriate) at the top of scale,

- the higher graded post extends exclusively, jointly or not at all into the new scp (3 or 5 as appropriate) at the bottom of scale.

Whilst there is a case to be made for all three approaches having reviewed the matter with South West Councils the consensus suggestion is that the new scp be shared between the higher and lower graded roles which has the effect of:

- i) maintaining a reasonable minimum (3 scp's) grade depth to demonstrate progression subject to satisfactory performance;
- ii) ensuring someone on a lower graded post is never paid more than someone in a higher graded post.

b. 'Depth' of the Grades (ie number of incremental points within grade) - when fitted to the Tavistock Town Council Scheme the new pay and grading structure has the effect of creating some short (up to 3 spinal column points) and some long (up to 7 spinal column points) grades as previously noted.

The question therefore arises as to whether or not local adjustments can be appropriately be made in order to provide a more consistent basis upon which in-grade progression can occur. Under the former arrangement the most normal grade depth was approximately 4 spinal column points – with one outlier. The particular area for attention in the new arrangement is grade 5 which comprises potentially 7 spinal column points.

c. Other Matters

- i. it can be seen that new SCP 13 does not equate to one or other of the former spinal column points and (unlike others in this category), falls on a grade boundary. The question therefore arises as to whether or not grade 5 should now commence at that level²;
- ii. arrangements for the award of increments (ie award as at year end and transfer into the new scheme, or transfer and then award).

² Note it is not proposed grade 4 end there as that grade boundary continues to be co-terminous with the new scp 12

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 TTC local grades 1 & 2. As regards 'translation' of spinal column points into the new structure it is suggested that the fairest treatment is for the crossover scp to be shared (ie to represent both the top point under the lower grade and the start point under the higher). This means that a higher graded job will never be paid less than a lower graded, but there may be temporary circumstances where both are paid the same eg when the lower paid is occupied by a fully competent member of staff and the higher by a new entrant yet to achieve full competency in their role.
- 4.2 The length of scale attaching to the grade 5 post (7 scp) is considered too long (ie it could take 7 years to get to top of scale with potential for inequity and/or challenge) and could appropriately be reduced to 5. It is therefore suggested that in order to achieve progression be agreed on the basis of SCP 13, SCP 14, SCP 15, SCP 17, and SCP 19.
- 4.3 Treatment of new scp 13 - grade 5 commence at scp 13.
- 4.4 Award of increments – in the interests of consistency that increments be awarded as at year end 2018/19 and the post then be assimilated into the revised pay and grading structure 2019/20.
- 4.5 That Officers proceed to give effect to the foregoing changes and any consequential actions³ subject to advice from the local authority Employers Organisation⁴.

Carl Hearn
TOWN CLERK
Tavistock Town Council

³ Currently the position of UNISON nationally in relation to whether or not exercises which simply involve a 'mapping' from old to new will require the formal revisit of local collective agreements (given that agreement has been reached nationally) is unclear.

⁴ ie South West Councils. It being acknowledged that Unison might, although a little unusual where a national agreement has been reached, take the view that collective agreements need to be individually revisited in relation to certain factors.