

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE No. 01/2008-09
COUNCIL 14 JULY 2008**

Chair:
Councillor Eddie Griffith

Deputy Chair:
Councillor GMMH Rahman Khan

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report to full Council arises from two reports considered by the General Purposes Committee.

**COMMISSION FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATION INVESTIGATION REPORT
INTO COMPLAINT NO. 07/1/04966**

- 2.1 The committee received a report to consider an investigation report of the Local Government Ombudsman, to determine action to be taken in the light of the finding of maladministration, and the Ombudsman's recommendations.
- 2.2 Officers informed the committee that they planned to compensate the relevant landlord for rent lost, and to issue guidance on the general topic of direct payments to landlords. It was noted that temporary procedures had been in place until 7th April 2008. Permanent rules were now in operation.
- 2.3 Following discussion of the report at the committee, the following resolutions were made.

WE RESOLVED:

That the findings of the investigation report be noted.

That the General Purposes Committee agree a payment to Mr Oak of £700 compensation and £150 (£50 of which has already been paid under the Council's complaints procedure) for his time and trouble in pursuing the complaint.

That with regard to the Ombudsman's recommendation that guidance be issued to officers who deal with disputes over direct payments to landlords, it be noted that interim guidance has already been issued to benefits assessment staff, pending introduction of new regulations relating to the Local Housing Allowance in April 2008.

(The Cabinet Concurs)

EQUAL PAY REVIEW PACKAGE AGREEMENT

- 3.1 The committee received a report to endorse the implementation of a revised set of employment terms for Council staff in accordance with the NJC for Local Authorities staff National Pay Settlement in 2001 relating to Equal Pay/Single Status.
- 3.2 Members noted that agreements had been reached with the Unions locally at the end of 2007, with the package now with the national unions for comment. Indications were that the national unions would sign-off the package, but the Council was still awaiting official notification. Members noted that the agreement included the identification of a timetable to evaluate all grades of staff under a single job evaluation scheme. New arrangements for notice periods, improvements of annual leave entitlements for manual staff and proposals to better approach recruitment and retention allowances were contained within the proposals. It was noted that of the c7,000 staff implicated by the deal, c4,300 would be evaluated in April, with the remainder falling in other groups.
- 3.3 Members raised concerns over the compensation offer; however they were assured by Officers that the package offered was broadly similar to what would be gained by a claim against the Council, and that the Unions were on board with the offer. Staff who had left within six months would be identified and invited to claim compensation. Staff who had left the Council after longer than six months would be free to contact the Council to claim compensation should they so wish.

WE RESOLVED:

That the terms of employment as described in the appended papers be implemented. That the compensatory payments described be made as a part of individually binding agreement with staff as required.

(The Cabinet agreed the terms of employment and the compensatory payments detailed in the Appendix to the report as a part of individually binding agreement with the staff as required. In so doing, it was noted that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed that the decisions in respect of this matter were both reasonable in all the circumstances and that it should be treated as a matter of urgency for the purposes of Paragraph 18 of Part 4 Section H of the Constitution and that the call in procedure should not apply to the action being taken).