

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

9th September 2019

Report of the Head of Human Resources – Sheenagh Rees

Matter for Information

Wards Affected:

All wards

HR Support provided to support school budget setting / Strategic Schools Improvement Programme - Spring 2019

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with details of the HR support provided to schools facing financial difficulties as a result of budget pressures, following receipt of their budgets in March 2019. In addition this report provides Members with details of the HR support provided to the Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP).

2. Background

In order to prepare for the financial pressures schools may face as a result of the budget setting process, the HR team offer advice and guidance, as well as training to school management teams throughout the year. The team establish a clear timetable for schools to operate within if they do find themselves facing budget difficulties and to ensure that any necessary workforce actions can be carried out in a timely way, and in a way that prevents further budget difficulties accruing. The HR team ensure they are available as much as possible during this difficult period in order to provide support to our schools.

3. Voluntary Redundancy

A Voluntary Redundancy (VR) 'window of opportunity' for school based employees was launched in February 2019. The aim of this is to support those schools who need to reduce paybill costs in order to set a balanced budget, and at the same time avoid compulsory redundancies.

32 Teachers and 58 Support Staff expressed interest in VR. 12 Teachers and 25 Support Staff left the Council's employment as a result, with a post being lost from the respective school, either directly or through a restructure.

4. Budget Setting Process

24 schools initially contacted the HR team to indicate difficulty in setting budgets, with the potential for an impact on staffing.

11 of these schools were able to resolve their financial problems with the advice and support of the HR team, by proactively seeking volunteers for Voluntary Redundancy or ending temporary contracts.

13 schools were unable to resolve budget difficulties. School Finance Sub Committees met in these schools in mid to end of March 2019 and where they were unable to set a budget, they referred the matter to their Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Committee (SDC).

The following reductions in staff numbers were identified in order to set budgets:

- 15.6 FTE Teaching Posts
- 19.78 FTE Support Staff Posts

HR Officers attended to support the Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Committees (SDDC) and Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Appeal Committees (SDDAC), providing advice and

support to the Governors to help them determine necessary action. As part of the process the following meetings are held:

- An initial Meeting to determine proposals in relation to job losses and consider alternative options including flexible working requests, VR applications and other cost reductions
- Consultation Meeting with Trade Unions to discuss proposals, consider alternative options and where possible to agree the skills audit criteria
- SDDC selection meeting to consider any skills audits in circumstances where staffing cuts are proposed
- SDDC Employee Representation Meeting, during which employee and trade union representative makes representations to SDDC
- SDDAC Appeal Committee following any dismissals (by reason of redundancy) should an employee appeal the dismissal.

All redundancy notices were issued, where no alternative had been identified, by 31st May 2019. This is important as it ensures that budget savings can be made in readiness for the start of the school year in September.

Between the issuing of notice and the end of employment (August 2019), HR Officers were available and contactable to provide support to employees. Every employee at risk of redundancy was allocated a named Redeployment Liaison Officers (RLOs) from within the HR team to provide personal, bespoke advice and guidance in relation to the redeployment process, to provide support in completing application forms and ensuring all vacancies are circulated to them in a timely manner.

The table below sets out the final position:

Teachers

Action	FTE
Redeployed	1
Voluntary Redundancy	12
Temporary contract terminated	3.7
Compulsory redundancy	1

Support Staff

Action	FTE
Voluntary Redundancy	12.9
Temporary contract terminated	5.9
Agreed reduction in hours and / or term time working	0.5

5. Strategic School Improvement Programme

HR support was provided to facilitate the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School on 31st August 2019, including supporting the necessary consultation with employees affected by the closure, and the redundancy and redeployment processes. A summary of actions taken is set out below:

Teachers

Action	FTE
Voluntary Redundancy	4
Temporary contract terminated	7.2
Redeployed	8
Resignations (job offers outside the County Borough)	2.6

Support Staff

Action	FTE
Voluntary Redundancy	5.3
Temporary contract terminated	4.6
Redeployment	8.4
Compulsory Redundancy	1

7. Financial Impact

In early March 2019 the Director of ELLL notified schools of their budgets for 2019/20. The Schools Delegated Budget for 2019/20 is £84,424,000 and was an increase of 3.32% from the 2018/19 Schools Delegated Budget.

All jobs lost as a result of VR, in line with the Council's ER VR CR Scheme are subject to a robust business case signed off by the Director of Finance in consultation with the Head of Transformation.

8. Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment as part of this report.

9. Valleys Communities Impacts:

There are no implications in relation to impact on Valleys Communities as a result of HR process.

10. Workforce Impacts

The workforce impacts are shown in Paragraph 4.

11. Legal Impacts

All employment processes reported within this report are compliant with the Schools Redundancy and Redeployment Policy and Procedure and employment legislation.

12. Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this report as all processes are in line with schools policies and employment legislation.

13. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item, however the relevant Trade Unions are consulted at each stage of the process.

14. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the report be NOTED.

FOR INFORMATION.

15. Appendices

None

16. List of Background Papers

School Redundancy/Redeployment Policy and Procedure

Individual VR Business Cases

17. Officer Contact

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