

INFORMATION ITEM

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

TO BE CONSIDERED - 4th September 2008

Title: Residential Allowances: Caretakers

Ward: City Wide

Report of: Head of Human Resources

Officer presenting report: Mike Cook - HR Manager

Contact telephone number: (0117) 92 23076

BRIEFING NOTE

A draft Vision of the Housing Caretaking Service was presented to a Neighbourhood and Housing Services Executive Member briefing on 3rd March 2008 following several months of data collection and benchmarking. Consultations with staff, trade unions councillors and tenants commenced following this meeting.

The proposals looked to change the perspective of the service, including the withdrawal of residency from Caretaking staff. Management were looking to conclude consultation on this Vision by May 2008. This issue was raised at the full Council meeting on 10th June 2008 Neighbourhood and Housing were asked to present a report to Quality of Life Scrutiny Committee on the future Vision for Caretaking Services.

This report was considered by the Quality of Life Scrutiny Committee on 14th July 2008 outlining the reasons behind the proposed vision and options considered. The Commission confirmed their support for an option that would retain some resident caretakers in each of 10 geographic areas that will be covered by the Caretaking Services.

Following a series of meetings between management and the Trade Unions some progress has been made in terms of the numbers and locations of residential staff and we believe it will be possible for an agreement to be reached in this area within the next month. However what has continued to be a problematic area is the potential loss of income for Caretakers through the changes to the levels of jobs and loss of enhancements, such as residential emoluments, shift

and weekend working. These changes would result in some staff being appointed to lower graded posts and having a cut in income of several thousand pounds. There is also the potential for up to approximately 20 staff to be displaced into NOPS. The options for redeploying this work group are considered to be very limited.

Discussions are ongoing on this issue although it is acknowledged that it may be difficult to reach a negotiated outcome. A further meeting is being held with full time trade union representatives on 19th August 2008 although it is difficult to see an acceptable outcome for both sides at this time. A verbal update could be provided at the HR Committee meeting in September. If an outcome can be achieved by the end of September then implementation of the review by the end of January 2009 could be possible. If an outcome is not possible management are likely to bring a report to the November HR Committee for a decision. If there is a need to go down this route we feel realistically implementation will be March 2009 at the earliest.

Mike Cook
HR Adviser

Mark Hughes
Head of Housing Operations
13/8/08

Appendices:

Appendix A - Extracts from HR Committee Report (25 January 2007) - Tied Accommodation (Residential Employees)

Extracts from HR Committee Report (25 January 2007) - Tied Accommodation
(Residential Employees)

8. Risk Assessment

- 8.2 The option of doing nothing could potentially leave the authority exposed to an equal pay claim or continuing the existing high level of emolument provision may lead to the provision of the service being uncompetitive against other providers.

10. Legal and Resource Implications

Kate Fryer, Solicitor 5th January 2007 - the legal comments for the employment aspects of the report are as follows:

To avoid any equal pay challenges from caretakers recruited after 1st February 2007, the Council should ensure that the arrangements for existing caretakers' accommodation are harmonised without undue delay.

Extract from minutes of HR Committee held on 26th July 2007 - 19.7/07 Tied
Accommodation arrangements for existing employees.

RESOLVED

- (2) That a delay in the implementation of the tied accommodation proposals for Neighbourhood and Housing Services employees be agreed only for a period not exceeding 15 months to enable the Director of Neighbourhood and Housing Services to complete the review of housing scheme manager and caretaking services;