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**CONTROL OF EMPLOYEE COSTS – DESK BASED SCRUTINY RESEARCH  
REPORT, AND COMPARATIVE ADVICE FROM WELSH LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

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**Reason for the Report**

1. The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the overall Council budget from a corporate and strategic perspective. It also has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's systems of financial control, administration and human resources.
2. In anticipation of receiving detailed proposals for control of employee costs as part of the City of Cardiff Cabinet's budget proposals for 2015/16, this item will enable the Committee to understand how local authorities in Wales and in England are addressing this significant area of local authority spend. It is hoped that in so doing, Members will be equipped with knowledge to debate what might be considered to be appropriate priorities for Cardiff, and provided with comparative information to enable informed detailed scrutiny of budget proposals in February 2015.

**Issues**

3. The Budget Strategy for 2015/16, agreed on 17 July 2014, included planning assumptions relating to a review of employment costs to deliver savings of £5.75 million. This was also highlighted in the 2015/16 Budget Proposals for Consultation report to Cabinet on 20 November 2014. The Strategy also reiterated that this would include a further review of the Council's Voluntary Severance Scheme.

## **Scope of the Scrutiny**

4. The Committee has commissioned information from two sources to inform their consideration at this meeting. One of these is a desk based research study from the Scrutiny Research Team (attached for Members' information at **Appendix A**), which analyses:
  - actions to reduce employee costs recommended by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Audit Commission;
  - statistics demonstrating the popularity of certain approaches provided by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD); and
  - (from published literature and a short e-mail survey) how the UK's other Core Cities have sought to control employee costs in 13 key areas.
  
5. The Committee has also invited Anna Freeman, Director of Employment at the Welsh Local Government Association, to attend Committee to advise on the challenges facing Welsh local authorities as they prepare to set their 2015/16 budgets, and how they are similarly addressing the area of controlling employee spend through the budget setting process.
  
6. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance, Councillor Graham Hinchey, has been invited to attend the meeting to listen to the information presented, along with Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources; and Philip Lenz, Chief Human Resources Officer.

## **Legal Implications**

7. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council

must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

### **Financial Implications**

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9. The Committee is recommended to:
  - i. Consider the information presented at the meeting; and;
  - ii. Report any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet.

**MARIE ROSENTHAL**

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

30 December 2014

**s c r u t i n y**



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**Scrutiny Research Team**

# **Reducing Employee Costs: A Desk Based Review of Current and Best Practices**

**Research Report**

**December 2014**



**The City of Cardiff Council**

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# 1. Introduction

The City of Cardiff Council's Scrutiny Research Team was commissioned by the Council's Policy Review and Performance Committee (PRAP) to identify the methods adopted by various Local Authorities (including Core Cities) in an attempt to reduce their employee cost.

The report is comprised of three sections.

The first section outlines some recommended actions to reduce employee costs from The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), The Local Government Association (LGA), Audit Commission and some statistics demonstrating the popularity of certain approaches as provided by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD).

The second section is a summary matrix of some of the approaches used or planned by the core cities in reducing employee cost. These include:

- Cuts to Hours
- Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management
- Withholding Pay Awards
- Removal of Honoraria/Acting up
- Pay Cuts
- Changes to Voluntary Severance
- Unpaid Leave
- Reviewing Pension Arrangements Senior
- Management Restructures
- Overtime/Agency Restrictions
- Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms
- Performance-related Pay/Removal of Increments
- Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc.

The majority of these headings were given to the research team when the work was commissioned, and a couple were added to reflect research findings that were applicable to the topic of reducing employee costs.

The third section provides more detailed information on the practices presented in section two of this report.

## **1.1. Research aim and objectives:**

To identify examples of adopted or planned practice by various Local Authorities including the Core Cities to help manage their employee costs.

More specifically this research will:

- Provide background information on recommended practice for reducing employee cost from organisations such as The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), The Local Government Association (LGA), Audit Commission and Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD),
- Examine any relevant strategies, methods and approaches that were used utilised by various Local Authorities including Core Cities.

## **2. Methodology**

The research initially involved contacting Core Cities to collect information on the approaches that they had adopted to cut employee costs over the past five years.

Given the limited timeframe for collecting this information, identifying and contacting the relevant source was problematic. In most cases, the response time offered by the respondent that would allow them to reply was not within the timescale of this report.

For this reason, the data collection relied heavily on a desk-based review of relevant literature from various local authority websites, reports from relevant professional bodies and other on-line documents that were publically available.

In the case of Liverpool, the deletion of posts and current overhaul of the Human Resources team prevented them from providing information in this timescale.

Bristol and Nottingham Councils did manage to respond to Cardiff Scrutiny Research's questions, and their responses have been enhanced below with references to published reports from those two authorities.

## 3. Recommended Practices

### 3.1. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Recommendations

The DCLG issued in its publication '50 Ways To Save' a series of 'sensible savings in local government' in December 2012. The most relevant in terms of reducing employee costs are summarised below<sup>1</sup>:

**Clamp down on corporate charge cards:** Introduce greater financial controls on corporate charge cards and credit cards. In DCLG, online transparency and tougher controls have helped cut expenditure on 'Government Procurement Cards' by over three-quarters, from £321,076 in 2009-10, to just £70,835 in 2011-12.12 DCLG cut the number of card holders, cancelled the cash withdrawal facility on the card (apart from business continuity users, in the case of a genuine emergency) and introduced new internal checks and audit trails.

**Cancel away days in 'posh' hotels and 'glitzy' award ceremonies:** Use a council-owned property to hold any away day. Or borrow a room from a neighbouring council at no cost, and offer a free room to them for their away day. Similarly, stop paying to attend glitzy 'award ceremonies' which are perceived as an excuse to make money from local government; councils spend an estimated £1.2 million a year on such ceremonies.

**Cut senior pay:** The local government Transparency Code opens up middle management and senior pay to greater public scrutiny, and the Localism Act allows Councillors via Full Council to set local 'pay policy statements' to get senior pay and perks (as well as pay offs) under control. Councils can lead from the top by having their Chief Executives take a pay cut. Ministers have taken a 5% pay cut and frozen their pay for five years. It was suggested that Chief Executives could therefore potentially do the same.

**Share senior staff:** Combine Chief Executives with other Councils or other public authorities. For example, Breckland and South Holland District Council share their management team, including Chief Executive, aiming to reduce senior management overheads by 35%.

**Scrapping the Chief Executive post entirely:** DCLG asserted that it was making it easier to abolish such posts without Councils having to fork out expensive 'golden goodbye' payoffs. For example, Leicester City Council believes it would save £175,000 per year from scrapping the post.

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<sup>1</sup> For the full report see:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/39264/50\\_ways\\_2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/39264/50_ways_2.pdf)



**Introduce a recruitment freeze:** For example, Devon County Council's vacancy management strategy introduced a recruitment freeze, except for hard-to-fill vacancies. Of the 1,200 staff leaving the organisation in 2010-11, the Council replaced only 480 with new appointments. The savings from the strategy was estimated at £7 million by the end of 2011-12.

**Freeze Councillor allowances and end Councillor pensions:** The publication suggested that Councillors should be volunteers, not paid from the public purse. In Whitehall, even full-time Ministers have cut ministerial salaries and frozen them for the remainder of the Parliament.

**Cut spending on consultants and agency staff:** Councils spending on procured professional services (including consultants) increased by 50% to £4.5 billion from 2004-05 to 2009-10. Spending on agency workers increased by 46% to £900 million over the same period. By contrast, Lambeth Council reduced the number of agency workers it employed from over 900 in 2009 to under 300 in 2011, saving £18 million in the process.

**End expensive 'leadership' courses:** Councils could review spending money on sending staff and councillors to expensive "leadership" training courses, such as Common Purpose. Such training courses can often run into tens of thousands of pounds

**Cut spending on 'head hunters' and expensive adverts:** Publish job vacancy information online as open data instead. It can cost £5,000 to £10,000 to place an advert in some national outlets. This will not end advertising in the media; local newspapers in particular will remain an important source to advertise jobs to those who may be 'digital excluded' and not have access to the internet. But over time, putting job adverts online will drive down advertising costs, make it easier to compare pay ranges within and across Councils, and show local people where their council tax goes.

**Review and reduce absenteeism:** For example, Staffordshire Council reduced the cost of absenteeism by £100,000 a month by providing support for staff with musculoskeletal problems and introducing new absence reporting measures. By developing in-house computer software that brought patterns of absence to managers' attention, Fareham Borough Council reduced its average sickness rates from 10.6 days in 2003-04 to 7.2 days in 2010-11, saving 'lost days' worth £446,000.

**Scrap trade union posts:** It was suggested that local authorities could consider taking this step.

**Stop providing free food and drink for meetings:** DCLG has cut spending on refreshments for meetings from £456,142 in 2009-10 to £32,053 in 2011-12. Guidance to staff now states that refreshments may only be ordered for meetings with external attendees of longer than four hours. Staff should avoid arranging meetings over lunchtime where possible and attendees should normally be asked to bring their own refreshments where practical. Expensive meals on Government Procurement Cards have also been stopped. Also, **ban mineral water at Council meetings:** Tap water in refillable bottles costs nothing and is better for the

environment. Manchester Council reduced its £93,000 water bill by 90% in two years.

**Reduce first class travel:** Previously DCLG spent £200,000 a year on first class rail travel in 2009-10; under the new administration, such spending had been cut to just £17,500 a year in 2011-12.

**Cut mileage payments:** Councils paid out £427 million in mileage allowances in 2009-10. The HMRC Approved Mileage Allowance Payment is currently 45 pence per mile. Some Council employees are on terms and conditions where they can able to claim up to 25p per mile more than the prevailing HMRC rate.

**Video conference instead of travel:** South Tyneside Council is embracing the latest video conferencing technology to reduce travel costs. The equipment will also generate income for the Council who plan to make the service available to businesses and community groups at competitive rates.

**Ask your staff for more sensible savings ideas:** There is recognition that staff will be the most informed and actually the most enthusiastic about cutting waste. Give a prize for best staff ideas for efficiencies. Allow staff to submit anonymous ideas too. For example, at Surrey County Council, over 300 employee suggestions have saved approximately £500,000, including: reducing travel and meeting costs, for example using more teleconferencing; reducing print and postage costs, and reducing office equipment and stationery costs.

### **3.2. The Audit Commission and Local Government Association (LGA) Recommendations**

In their 2011 publication “*Work In Progress*” – *Meeting Local Needs With Lower Workforce Costs*” the Audit Commission and Local Government Association jointly set out recommendations and case studies on this subject (available at the link below):<sup>2</sup> They are summarised as:

- Integrate workforce data across departments to improve the quality of corporate decision making about the workforce;
- Assess how to reward staff equitably for their performance and contribution to organisational objectives;
- Benchmark pay rates with public, private and voluntary organisations in similar labour markets, to understand how their own rates compare;
- Use a range of data, including the Commission's Value For Money (VFM) Profiles, to understand their relative spend on staff costs;
- Use a total rewards approach (pay, pensions, flexible working, and other benefits) to attract prospective, and keep existing, employees; and

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=207697ef-b475-4d60-9f3a-780bf6799062&groupId=10180](http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=207697ef-b475-4d60-9f3a-780bf6799062&groupId=10180)

- Reduce reliance on overtime and spot contracts by negotiating a more flexible approach to hours and pay.

Over the same period, Councils should also:

- Review the full range and scale of services they can offer alone and in partnership with others, including neighbouring authorities who provide similar services, withdrawing or sharing some services where necessary to protect others;
- Complete departmental and service reviews to assess how best to meet community needs with fewer resources;
- Use those reviews to decide on future workforce numbers, skills and configuration; and
- Review current organisational structures to create leaner, flatter structures with increased spans of management control.

### **3.2.1. Devon County Council: Vacancy Management Strategy**

The Council's vacancy management strategy, which started in November 2009, introduced a recruitment freeze, except for hard-to-fill vacancies like those in children's social care.

The council has a consistent staff turnover of about 1200 a year (about 16 per cent of the total headcount excluding teachers), which means they have been able to reduce numbers without making large-scale redundancies. In 2010/22, of the 1200 staff leaving the organisation, the Council replaced only 480, with new appointments requiring approval by the Chief Executive.

The savings from the strategy's implementation will be about £7 million by the end of 2011/12. This represents 13 per cent of the total savings they need to find to fill a £54 million funding gap.

### **3.2.2. London Borough of Lambeth: reducing reliance on agency workers**

In 2009, Lambeth Council decided to reduce the number of agency workers, which were about a quarter of the workforce, cost the council almost £50 million a year. The Council collected detailed and reliable data on numbers of agency workers, their service, and their cost. Over nine months, many agency workers assimilated to permanent contracts. Agency workers employed for more than 12 weeks are now treated to standardised day rates, saving £664,000. Internal procedures for appointing agency workers were tightened up. Any appointment for more than three months requires a rigorous business case and sign-off from senior management.

The number of agency workers reduced from over 900 in 2009 to under 300 in April 2011. This has saved the Council £18 million over this period.

### **3.2.3. Fareham Borough Council: reducing sickness absence**

The Council reduced average sickness rates from 10.6 days in 2003/04 to 7.2 days in 2010/11- saving 'lost days' worth £446,000. Part of the solution was to develop in- house computer software that brought patterns of absence to managers' attention. It enabled early action to address problems and helped managers to identify staff who were persistently taking sick days. The system provides information about long- and short-term sickness absence, enabling analysis by grade and service.

### **3.2.4. Sunderland City Council: staff redeployment**

An internal jobs market (IJM) helps the Council to fill new vacancies with existing staff- preventing redundancies and keeping local knowledge. The Council recruits to new positions using personality and aptitude tests, rather than just qualifications and knowledge.

People who are displaced after service reviews, and who aren't immediately given new roles through the IJM, are put into the Staff Working in Transition and Change (SWITCH) team. This pool of employees fills temporary vacancies, works on short-term projects supporting the many change initiatives taking place, and reduces the use of agency staff or external contractors. The SWITCH pool also covers sickness absence and maternity leave.

### **3.2.5. Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council: shared management team**

The plan of Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council to merge management teams is the first step towards more sharing of services and staff, without losing their separate identities or threatening their sovereignty.

The Chief Executive was jointly appointed in May 2011, and the councils have now successfully merged senior management teams. Total management posts have reduced from 31 to 15. After the £1.3 million cost of merging the teams, it should save Cherwell £3.4 million and South Northamptonshire £1.8 million over five years.

The longer term plan is to review each service to find opportunities for sharing. Early scoping of savings from the fourth tier of management suggests savings of £1.1 million for South Northamptonshire and £2 million for Cherwell over five years.

### 3.2.6. Rhondda Cynon Taf

In November 2013 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council outlined five options<sup>3</sup>. They were:

- Option one includes reducing the number of hours for future full-time staff from 37 to 35 per week, changing temporary staff hours to 30 and giving current employees the chance to alter their hours.
- The second option encourages more over 55s to access a “Flexible Retirement Scheme”, giving them the chance to reduce their hours or be downgraded to lower-graded posts.
- In option three, the enhanced redundancy packages – designed to “soften the blow” of losing a job – would be less generous.
- And in option four, staff aged over 55 would be encouraged to apply for voluntary redundancy.
- Finally, employees would be encouraged to join an “early release” scheme, leaving with a severance payment.

### **3.3. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development Statistics**

As part of their research report, the CIPD identified the following uptake of labour cost savings from alternatives to redundancy<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1: Employers’ use of main alternatives to redundancy, 2009**

	50%
Recruitment freeze	
Terminated temporary contracts	44%
Flexible working	19%
Cutting bonuses	17%
Short-term working	15%
Cutting pay	7%

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<sup>3</sup> These proposals were not part of the LGA and Audit Commission recommendations but were taken from the news story found here: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/staff-set-reduction-hours-part-6317158>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A3435C16-6837-4DC9-85B1-0646F72310F3/0/impact\\_27\\_2of3.pdf](http://www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/A3435C16-6837-4DC9-85B1-0646F72310F3/0/impact_27_2of3.pdf)



## 4. Matrix of Core Cities

Members will find on the following seven pages data from the UK's other nine Core Cities. The first three pages detail arrangements in seven key areas of expenditure, and the following four pages detail a further six areas of expenditure.

<b>City</b>	<b>Cuts to Hours</b>	<b>Changes to Sickness Benefit/ Management</b>	<b>With holding Pay Awards</b>	<b>Removal of Honoraria/ Acting up</b>	<b>Pay Cuts</b>	<b>Changes to Voluntary Severance</b>	<b>Unpaid Leave</b>
<b>Birmingham</b>	Library hours and events cut	Review and improve management	Working on the assumption of no award 2014-15				
<b>Bristol</b>		Introduction of pilot sickness album scheme  Staff Health and Welfare Committee  Evaluation of using private treatment to expedite returns to work		Honoraria abolished several years ago  Acting up permitted but controlled by People Panel		'Flexible' retirement offered.  VS continues to be an option	Employees can purchase 10 days per annum through a payroll deduction

<b>Glasgow</b>	Potential cut of public holidays	Councillor quoted at saying they will look at benefits and work patterns			Potential loss of time and a half for holidays	Phased early departure scheme	
<b>Leeds</b>	Reduced opening hours of sport centres and household waste sites  Flexible working including compressed hours	Improving approaches to sickness.  Utilising 'fit' notes instead of 'sick'				Attempts to maximise the uptake by the end of 2014	
<b>Liverpool</b>	Reducing working hours				Looking into driving down staff pay		
<b>Manchester</b>						Added incentives offered for those who leave to help the next budget	
<b>Newcastle</b>	Library, leisure and customer	New sickness absence communication			New Chief Executive		



	service hours to reduce	strategy to help promote positive attendance culture			on reduced salary		
<b>Nottingham</b>						There is no voluntary severance but redundancy pay has been reduced to the statutory formula	Employees can purchase annual leave
<b>Sheffield</b>						The preferred option with deleting vacant posts to meet necessary reductions	

(Table Continued)

City	Reviewing Pension Arrangements	Senior Management Restructures	Overtime/ Agency Restrictions	Expenses/ Altering of Contract Terms	Performance-related Pay/ Removal of Increments	Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc
<b>Birmingham</b>	Managing impact of change in arrangements	Reducing senior staff and streamlining to three directorates	No overtime for senior positions.  ICT brought back in-house	Review of grading practices for equal-pay claims		Work on manager flexibility.  Review of ‘behind the scenes’ function  Transfer of some services to external provider  Workforce plan  Reduction of support to Chief Executive and Strategic Directors
<b>Bristol</b>	New pension regulations changing scheme	A council-wide review has been carried out	People Panel has restrictions in place	Interview expenses only offered to candidates with a disability		‘New ways of working’ scheme promoting flexibility and redeployment  Considering non-pay related benefits to be competitive

<b>Glasgow</b>				Changes to workers' terms and conditions could save 5m over the next two years but no compulsory redundancies, with core pay and pensions untouched		Not filling vacancies.  Reviewing training  Better staff scheduling
<b>Leeds</b>	Change to members' pension scheme	Reducing management posts	Cutting ICT overtime	Changing terms and conditions to help avoid risk of redundancies including withdrawal of pay protection  Standardising pay structures		Addressing contract management
<b>Liverpool</b>		Calls to reduce number of councillors and their expenses		Reviewing terms and conditions  Standardised worker agreement, with pay, terms and conditions that are approved by the trade unions.		

<b>Manchester</b>						<b>M people theme</b> to help maximise efficiency of the workforce
<b>Newcastle</b>		Adopting new senior management arrangements to reduce number of senior managers	Attempting to remove or significantly reduce overtime wherever possible by shifting work patterns.	Reducing councillors' allowances and selling the Lord Mayor's coach and car.		<p>Redeploying to avoid redundancies</p> <p>Reducing and revising support to councillors</p>
<b>Nottingham</b>		The number of managers has been reduced	Reduction of spend on overtime and agency workers		Only pay increments to the lower paid, for three years nobody had an increment	
<b>Sheffield</b>					<p>5-year pay-freeze from 2008 to 2013.</p> <p>No additional payments beyond those in contract.</p> <p>No performance-related pay due to robust</p>	Fewer appointments of members to positions of Special Responsibility

					performance management arrangements.	
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## **5. Additional Core City Information**

With the exception of the few examples specifically referred to below where data is more than two years old, the core city information gathered is less than two years old.

### **5.1. Birmingham**

NB - Information on sickness absence is taken from Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny 'Sickness Absence' published in April 2011

#### **Cuts to Hours**

- Library of Birmingham to cut hours from 73 to 40, 100 jobs to go. Extra services and events which do not pay for themselves to be stopped.

#### **Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management**

- A review has highlighted some of the areas which could be further enhanced to move towards a sustained reduction in sickness absence. Ensuring that managers are well equipped to tackle sickness through the tools and guidance which is provided to them is most important. The Committee would like to see strengthened support provided to those who are working more closely to the front line, through better communication channels. Alongside this there should be a greater onus on the employee in managing their own reduction in sickness.

To assist managers in monitoring their own services' sickness rates, more analysis can usefully be undertaken of current sickness figures, taking advantage of the reporting power which the new People Solutions system provides.

The Council should clearly demonstrate the limits of tolerance with regards to sickness and focus on a strong evidence base for interventions, then hopefully the organisation through greater understanding and support of its employees will be able to sustain a more significant reduction in sickness absence over time.

#### **Withholding Pay Awards**

- There is an assumption that there will not be any pay award for staff in 2014-15, and removing the corporate provision in that year for the general effects of inflation. Should there be a pay award and, in any case, in order to fund general inflationary increases in costs, these will need to be funded through a combination of increased income and further efficiency savings within each service.

### Reviewing Pension Arrangements

- Managing the impact of changes in pension arrangements - Increasing contributions to address the pension fund deficit over the long term have been built into financial plans but there may be a requirement for increased contributions from 2017/18.

### Senior Management Restructures

- During 2014-15 the council will also be creating our new streamlined structure of just three directorates – Economy, People and Place.
- Birmingham will develop a flexible workforce with talented generic managers that can quickly move around the organisation to respond to priorities.
- Cross Division reduction in senior staff.

### Overtime/Agency Restrictions

- Those employees working in senior positions do not receive overtime payment and all other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined from time to time in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council Policy.
- More than £20 million a year is being slashed from the taxpayer's bill for Service Birmingham amid a series of changes that will see 500 jobs brought back in-house.

Birmingham City Council has negotiated more than £150 million off the cost of the controversial outsourcing contract, to carry out ICT and project work, across the remaining seven years.

Among a host of changes announced by the authority this morning will see its call centre brought back in house by the end of the year, with 500 employees transferring to council employment.

### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Pay and grading practices with potential equal pay implications are being addressed. On-going equal pay claims against the council are being managed.
- The Council is pursuing a range of options to generate the necessary level of resources to fund Equal Pay settlements.

### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- Generic manager skills are being recognised for improved flexibility to move employees around the council to meet service needs.
- The Support Service Review 2013 looked at the 'behind the scenes' council functions including research, analysis, information and data, policy and strategy, performance management, commissioning and contract management, public engagement and consultation, marketing and communications, complaints, member services and project management.
- The transfer of some services to Acivico (a wholly owned external company created by the council) such as civic catering, building cleaning and services management.
- The creation of a Professional Support Services function to coordinate administrative support across the council.
- In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for all posts, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community, delivered effectively and efficiently and at times at which those services are required.
- Implementation of reduction in support to Chief Executive and Strategic Directors which have also already been planned

## **5.2. Bristol**

### Cuts to Hours

- No plans – unlikely.

### Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management

- Highly unlikely to remove sickness benefit.
- Introducing a pilot sickness absence (telephone line) scheme with an external health care provider (+ 25% reduction in sickness absence for targeted work groups).
- The Staff Health and Welfare Select Committee was established in June 2005. The key question the Select Committee sought to address was what measures the council can put in place to effectively promote staff health and welfare thus reducing sickness absence and ill health retirements, increasing staff satisfaction and improving productivity and services.

The key messages of the Committee cover the following areas:



- Managers need to take a proactive approach to promoting well-being and managing absence
  - Existing policies and procedures should be used effectively
  - Current health promotion activities should be evaluated to ensure that resources are best focussed for maximum effect
  - An employer funded Employee Assistance Package should be evaluated to assess potential benefits and value for money
- There should be an evaluation of the benefits of using private medical treatment in enabling employees to return to work (e.g. physiotherapy, MRI cans for muscular/skeletal problems).

#### Withholding Pay Awards

- Highly unlikely.

#### Removal of Honoraria/Acting up

- Honoraria was abolished years ago; acting-up arrangements permitted in relation to established posts; People Panel (board of top managers that meets weekly) approves any proposals to recruit to anything other than like-for-like arrangements).

#### Pay Cuts

- Highly unlikely.

#### Changes to Voluntary Severance

- Likely to continue to be offered as part of service re-design work.
- “Flexible retirement”, in accordance with provisions contained within the LGPS regulations (over 70 approvals to date).

#### Unpaid Leave

- Employees can purchase up to 74 hours/10 days (pro rata for part-time staff) per annum through a monthly payroll deduction; c£450k in salary savings (plus on-costs) realised in 2014/15.

#### Reviewing Pension Arrangements

- Spending plans adjusted to reflect the level of pension contribution required as identified by the Avon Pension Fund’s Actuary in 2013 for the next three years.
- New pension regulations changing scheme benefits to be implemented from 2014.

### Senior Management Restructures

- A council-wide management review (Tiers 1 - 3) has been carried out, which has resulted in an overall reduction in the number of posts. There are no plans to repeat any time soon.
- All posts at first and second tier Director level are subject to a pay related annual appraisal scheme.

### Overtime/Agency Restrictions

- Restrictions already in place; People Panel approves (or not).
- Vacancy Management controls based around the recruitment of permanent, temporary and agency staff.

### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Interview expenses can only be claimed by candidates who have declared themselves as having a disability on their application form. Eligible candidates will need to complete an interview expenses form and provide receipts. No plans to rescind relocation expenses at this time.

### Performance-related Pay/Removal of Increments

- No plans; unlikely.

### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- “New Ways of Working” incorporating home and remote working, flexible working, hot desking etc.
- Implementing approved redeployment arrangements (through a “New Opportunities Programme”) which has reduced the incidence of redundancy, and associated costs.
- Considering the implementation of market competitive non-pay related benefits.

## **5.3. Glasgow**

NB – Some Information below is taken from news items published on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011

### Cuts to Hours

- Council workers face cut in public holidays. The council is looking to make savings without resorting to compulsory redundancies and may look at insisting staff work certain public holidays and lose time-and-a-half payment for them as at present<sup>5</sup>.

### Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management

- “By taking a hard look at our holiday and sick pay entitlement, as well as whether we can offer greater flexibility in working patterns, I am confident we can make those savings without compulsory redundancies. “However, in order to do that, the trade unions will need to carefully consider their response to the proposals and understand that there is no easy alternative<sup>6</sup>.”

### Changes to Voluntary Severance

- In Glasgow City Council, departure dates were set by individual heads of service and spread over a three-year period. Glasgow City Council ran an early departure scheme in 2010 targeted at all staff over the age of 50. The scheme excluded staff working in business-critical posts in education and social work services. A total of 2,607 individuals applied and all were accepted for departure

### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Glasgow City Council has said changes to workers’ terms and conditions would save it £5m over the next two years but has said it would stick to its position of no compulsory redundancies, with core pay and pensions untouched.<sup>7</sup>

### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- Glasgow Community and Safety Services (GCSS) Current Vacancies Not Filled - Non filling of vacancies arising in current year, full year impact in 2013/14.
- GCSS Assumed Vacancies Not Filled - Assumed staff turnover vacancies.
- GCSS Service Budget Reductions -Resources reviewed including training and ancillary supplies.
- Glasgow City Marketing Bureau Review of Staffing Structure - Job descriptions to be reviewed and key responsibilities reallocated to remaining employees

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/council-workers-face-cut-in-public-holidays.13275086>

<sup>6</sup> councillor Paul Rooney quoted in the same article

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

- Glasgow Life Workforce Planning Strategy – Strategy to more closely align workforce with service using better staff scheduling.
- In some teams within the department, applications for early departure were equivalent to 40 per cent of the team workforce. Following a detailed review to determine what investment was needed to maintain services and flexibility, the department identified that it would bring in 452 staff. This was achieved by recruiting staff and redeploying them from elsewhere in the council.

#### **5.4. Leeds**

NB – Information on attendance management and employee sickness is taken from two reports published in 2011.

##### Cuts to Hours

- Reduced opening hours of facilities e.g. sports centres, household waste sites.
- The Council offers various flexible working schemes ranging from standard flexi time working to annualised hours and compressed hours. This clearly helps staff find the right work/life balance and reduces the need for people to take sick days for domestic purposes.

##### Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management

- Improving sickness management and supporting people back to work.
- The council are satisfied that the authority has robust sickness management procedures and management frameworks in place. These have significantly improved over the past few years and are clearly supported by the Trade Unions.
- Both HR Officers and the Trade Unions report that the application of the procedures across the authority is inconsistent. There has therefore been the concept and roll out of the Enabling Managers Project to bring consistency in the application of procedures.
- The council strongly supports the concept of “fit notes”. That is, understanding what duties a person *can* undertake rather than not.

##### Changes to Voluntary Severance

- The Council has operated a voluntary retirement and severance scheme since 2010/11 which has contributed to a reduction in the workforce of 1,900 FTEs at the 31st March 2014. The Early Leavers scheme, covering the period up to and including March 2016 is continuing and in the current year all services

have been requested to maximise the number of staff who can leave under the scheme by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

- Savings on staffing will be realised through both the deletion of vacant posts and through staff across all services in the Directorate exiting the Authority through the Early Leaver's Initiative. In addition further savings will be realised through a reduction in the number of JNC posts.

#### Reviewing Pension Arrangements

- Within Democratic Services proposals are being developed to reduce the cost of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements and the cost of Members Support. In addition, the budget reflects the impact of the recent change to the Members' pension scheme.

#### Senior Management Restructures

- Working more closely both within and across directorates and will result in a significant reduction in staffing including reducing the number of senior management posts.
- Further reduction in JNC management posts.

#### Overtime/Agency Restrictions

- Through cutting overtime - ICT will do more changes in working hours and will reduce maintenance contracts to provide less cover. This could result in longer downtime if there are any failures.

#### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Proposed savings from changes to employees' terms and conditions which will help reduce the risk of compulsory redundancies as the Council continues to tackle budget cuts and meet increased demand for some services. These changes include the withdrawal of pay protections and changes to travel arrangements.
- To deliver the changes, the structure of the HR service and the way it works is changing, with increased functions being managed from within the HR Centre. Local HR teams will combine for further efficiencies to be realised, and grade structures will be standardised across all local teams.

#### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- Significant savings can be achieved through improved contract management arrangements which includes reviewing payments made under existing contracts, contract renegotiation and reducing areas of off contract spend.

## **5.5. Liverpool**

### Cuts to Hours

- Feedback from consultation exercises in broad measure reflects some of the actions being taken including driving down staff working hours.

### Pay Cuts

- Feedback from consultation exercises in broad measure reflects some of the actions being taken including driving down staff pay.

### Senior Management Restructures

- Feedback from consultation exercises in broad measure reflects some of the actions being taken including reducing the number of councillors and their expenses.

### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Feedback from consultation exercises in broad measure reflects some of the actions being taken including driving down staff terms and conditions.
- Liverpool city council uses a type of zero hours contract, called a standardised worker agreement, with pay, terms and conditions that are approved by the trade unions. This is used to employ 442 people only in those areas where it is acceptable to both the organisation and the employees and where set working hours are not appropriate, such as sessional working and special events, including bar and catering staff, stewards and technical staff.

The council has a strict policy that prohibits the use of such contracts as a substitute for full-time employment and is committed to not using such contracts to the detriment of its employees.

## **5.6. Manchester**

### Changes to Voluntary Severance

- Consideration will be given to the benefit of offering an incentivised opportunity for voluntary early retirement and voluntary severance to staff to meet the specific circumstances faced.
- In line with changes in Pensions Regulations, the Efficiency Early Release Scheme, approved by Personnel Committee in October of this year, replaces

the former Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) comprising Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) and Voluntary Severance (VS).

- Policy Statement to be amended by increasing the maximum discretionary lump sum payment from a maximum of 30 weeks pay to a maximum of 36 weeks pay for individuals leaving the organisation in support of the delivery of the 2015/17 budget.
- To agree that the authority should develop a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) to allow those staff who transferred to the Council as part of the Public Health transfer in April 2013 to apply to leave the authority through severance arrangements broadly aligned to those proposed within this report.
- The Council's non re-engagement policy as amended in June 2011 will continue to apply. This current draft includes proposals to require high earners who return to the same part of the public sector within 12 months to repay payments made on voluntary departure.
- It is proposed to amend the Council's policy on discretionary payments to increase the maximum amount payable to 36 weeks' actual pay based on three weeks pay per year of service up to 12 years. This will incentivise staff under the age of 55 years to consider the option of Severance, and is likely to provide a wider age spread of staff taking up the offer. As severance costs are generally less expensive than release of pension with associated costs, a higher proportion of Voluntary Severance will reduce the Council's financial liabilities.
- Rather than continuing current working arrangements, an employee, who meets the relevant criteria can, from age 55, request to either:
  - reduce their hours; and/or
  - move to a lower grade
  - use a combination of reduction in hours and grade and draw their pension benefits whilst continuing in employment and, if they wish, build up further benefits in the LGPS.

#### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- **m people** was developed in 2009 to support the delivery of the Council's transformation programme through developing a highly skilled and flexible workforce. The focus for the development of **m people** was focusing on the existing workforce, to ensure the right people with the right skills and attitude were in the right roles to meet organisational need.

## **5.7. Newcastle**

NB – Some information on sickness absence is taken from a report covering the years 2002-2004.

### Cuts to Hours

- Review Library, Leisure and Customer Service opening and contact hours to make sure there is an efficient and effective service to customers.

### Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management

- Organisational Development Division to formulate a sickness absence communication strategy of key corporate messages to communicate to new and existing employees to further promote a positive attendance culture.

### Pay Cuts

- A new Chief Executive has been appointed on a reduced salary.

### Senior Management Restructures

- The council will adopt new senior management arrangements, which will reduce the number of the most senior managers and which will also be reflected in a new organisation structure for the council.
- Review the organisation of the new customer facing service to make sure it has an effective, lean and integrated middle / specialist management structure.

### Overtime/Agency Restrictions

- Seeking to remove or significantly reduce overtime wherever possible by changing working patterns and through better management of peak workloads.

### Expenses/Altering of Contract Terms

- Reduction of councillors' allowance and there will also be one-off capital receipts including the sale of the Lord Mayor's coach and car.

### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- There is a successful track record of avoiding compulsory redundancies and redeploying staff.
- Reduce and revise support to councillors from an individual officer to the service as a whole, reduce ward budgets and ward committees will be held less often and in ways that encourages more involvement from residents.



## **5.8. Nottingham**

### Cuts to Hours

- None planned

### Changes to Sickness Benefit/Management

- None planned

### Withholding Pay Awards

- Not planned

### Removal of Honoraria/Acting up

- None planned

### Changes to Voluntary Severance

There is no voluntary severance but redundancy pay has been reduced to the statutory formula

### Unpaid Leave

- Employees can purchase annual leave

### Senior Management Restructures

- The number of managers has been reduced.

### Overtime/Agency Restrictions

- Spend on overtime and agency workers has been reduced.

### Expenses/ Altering of Contract Terms

- Not planned

### Pay Cuts

- Not planned

## **5.9. Sheffield**

### Changes to Voluntary Severance

- Necessary reductions will be managed in the first instance through deleting vacant posts, voluntary early retirement (VER) and voluntary severance (VS) schemes where appropriate and then through the Council's Managing Employee Reductions (MER) procedure to achieve the balance of reductions and redesign services.

### Performance-related Pay/Removal of Increments

- The authority will not make additional payments beyond those specified in the contract of employment unless varied by the appropriate authority decision making process.
- The authority does not operate a performance related pay system as it believes that it has sufficiently strong performance management arrangements in place to ensure high performance from its senior officers. Any areas of under-performance are addressed rigorously.
- Council leaders proposed the end of a three year pay freeze which has saved the council around £5million per year in November 2013.

### Other Measures – Workforce Planning etc

- Revisions made to the structure of the Scheme, when allied to fewer appointments of Members to positions of Special Responsibility in 2013/14, resulted in financial savings being achieved of approximately £96k over a full year.

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Scrutiny Services, City of Cardiff Council  
Room 263h, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW  
Tel: 029 2087 2953 Email: [scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk)  
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