
Report to
Council

8th February 2005

Report of
Chief Executive
Title
Implementing Single Status

1. Purpose

1.1 This report is supplementary to the private and public reports issued to Members on 31st January 2005. Its purpose is to update members on issues which have arisen since those reports were published.

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to

2.1 Adopt the recommendations identified in the report from the independent review team on the job evaluation exercise. (Appendix 1)

3. Background

3.1 The public and private reports gave a very full background to the issue of Single Status. Trade Union colleagues were briefed face to face on the contents when it was issued. Briefings have taken place with elected members since then.

4. Report Back on Independent Review of Job Evaluation

4.1 Section 3.15 of the Public Report refers to a review of the job evaluation exercise to be undertaken by independent experts jointly on behalf of management and trade unions. The outcomes of this review were received on Friday 4th February and are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The full report is being circulated to trade unions and elected members and copies will be made available to employees.

4.2 The report is very detailed but the key headline set out in Appendix 1 is the following:

"In the light of this review, we are satisfied that the evaluation exercise in Coventry was carried out in accordance with the principles of part 4 of the National Agreement and that the integrity of the scheme has been maintained"

We have some reservations about some aspects of the procedures adopted locally, for example on Direct Entry (see below) and the 'default to jobholder' where there is disagreement in analysis interviews; and we are recommending that these be

reconsidered. However, we do not believe that these adversely affected the evaluation outcomes in any serious way and certainly not in ways that cannot be resolved through the normal appeals process."

The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the process and the management and trade union side had already accommodated a number of these in previously agreed discussions to improve the job evaluation process. In summary we are proposing to adopt the recommendations of the report in full as follows:

- (i) The revised job evaluation process already includes a proposal not to use the 'direct entry' method for the future and is awaiting trade union approval to trial the new arrangements.
- (ii) Checks will be made to ensure that all notes are brought together within the packs in preparation for the appeals
- (iii) A proposed cut off point between Hay and the NJC scheme will be put to the Trade Unions as a revision to the amended job evaluation procedure.
- (iv) The amended procedure already contains the recommendation that, in future, evaluations default to the analyst in job evaluation interviews.

5. Unofficial Industrial Action

5.1 After publication of the Report to Council last week some employees in the City Services Directorate chose to take illegal industrial action by withdrawing their labour on Wednesday 2nd February. This action disrupted services, most noticeable of which was domestic refuse collection. Management wrote to all full-time officials of the two unions with members involved (TGWU, UNISON). to confirm that the action was unofficial. This has been confirmed by the TGWU. Nothing has yet been heard from UNISON.

5.2 All employees taking the unofficial action were also advised, in personal letters delivered to their homes, that the action was unofficial and therefore illegal. Employees were then given the opportunity to return to work that afternoon. Some employees did return that day, the remainder returned on Thursday morning. Officers have been seeking to keep members and the public informed about the impact of such action but have learned some lessons from the action last week and will be seeking to improve the processes for letting members and the public know about disruption of services for any reason.

6. Other Implications

| | Implications (See below) | No Implications |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Area Co-ordination | ✓ | |
| Best Value | ✓ | |
| Children and Young People | | ✓ |
| Comparable Benchmark Data | ✓ | |
| Corporate Parenting | | ✓ |
| Coventry Community Plan | ✓ | |
| Crime and Disorder | ✓ | |
| Equal Opportunities | ✓ | |
| Finance | ✓ | |
| Health and Safety | ✓ | |
| Human Resources | ✓ | |
| Human Rights Act | ✓ | |
| Impact on Partner Organisations | ✓ | |
| Information and Communications Technology | | ✓ |
| Legal Implications | ✓ | |
| Property Implications | | ✓ |
| Race Equality Scheme | ✓ | |
| Risk Management | ✓ | |
| Sustainable Development | ✓ | |
| Trade Union Consultation | ✓ | |
| Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact | ✓ | |

6.1 Area co-ordination

Single status impacts on Area co-ordination as it does on most staff in the council

6.2 Best Value

Taking action to limit illegal withdrawal of labour ensures the Council meets its obligations to provide best value services for its citizens.

6.3 Comparable Benchmark Data, Coventry Community Plan, Crime and Disorder, Impact on Partner Organisations, the Coventry compact/voluntary sector

Single status impacts on a number of these issues because of comparisons between employers in the city and regionally in terms of pay levels.

Industrial action which disrupts refuse services has a potential impact on the work of partner organisations, on perceptions of local neighbourhoods.

6.4 Equal Opportunity

The report of the independent review team in to the job evaluation exercise states: -

“We found no evidence of bias or discrimination in the exercise. Job analysts, evaluation panel and review panel members were all thoroughly trained, they kept good records of their decision making processes and worked extremely well together in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. All of these features are consistent with the principles of the National Agreement”

6.5 Finance

There will be a cost to catching upon the disruption services, although there is no intention to pay overtime payments to catch up the work.

Employees will be re-assured on publication of the report of the independent review team that the job evaluation exercise has been fair and consistent in its approach and that, subject to the appeals process, all issues will be addressed.

6.6 Health and Safety and Sustainable Development

If rubbish is left uncollected for along period there is a potential health and safety risk.

Sound methods of dealing with waste are part of a successful sustainable development policy.

6.7 Human Resources

Single status is the biggest single human resources issue with which the council is dealing at present.

6.8 Human Rights Act

Obviously the implications of the human rights legislation need to be taken into consideration when considering employees' employment rights.

6.9 Legal

Legal advice has been taken throughout work on Single Status.

6.10 Race Equality Scheme

All the appropriate race equality impact assessment has been done on the job evaluation scheme and on the impact of the Single Status and there are no discernible trends affecting specific minority groups.

6.11 Risk Management

The report of the independent review team reduces the risk of any later claim that the Job Evaluation exercise was biased or inconsistent. The management of illegal industrial action substantially reduces the risk of further such unofficial action.

6.12 Trade Union Consultation

A copy of the full council report and the independent review of job evaluation has been sent to trade unions. All 3 unions have been allowed facility time for members meetings which take place on the 8th (UNISON AND TGWU) and 9th February (GMB). All full time regional officials were advised by management of the action to be taken in respect of the unofficial action by their members.

7. **Monitoring**

7.1 The actions of Local Authorities nationally will be monitored in respect of the Stefan Cross enquiry. The Joint Negotiating Group will continue to monitor the job evaluation and appeals processes.

8. **Timescales**

8.1 Trade Unions have already been requested to agree a date for appeals following the completion of training for stewards.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

None

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1 SECTION C – SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, our conclusions and recommendations related to the terms of reference for the review are as follows:

Terms of Reference – Job Evaluation Process Review

1. Carry out an independent and objective review of the job evaluation process undertaken by Coventry City Council

We have carried out a review, as requested, of both the procedures adopted at Coventry City Council and the evaluation outcomes.

2. The review to determine whether the process has been carried out in accordance with the joint advice of part 4 of the National Agreement thereby maintaining the integrity of the job evaluation scheme

In the light of this review, we are satisfied that the evaluation exercise in Coventry was carried out in accordance with the principles of part 4 of the National Agreement and that the integrity of the scheme has been maintained.

We have some reservations about some aspects of the procedures adopted locally, for example, on Direct Entry (see below), and the 'default to jobholder' where there is disagreement in analysis interviews; and we are recommending that these be reconsidered. However, we do not believe that these adversely affected the evaluation outcomes in any serious way and certainly not in ways that cannot be resolved through the normal appeals process.

3. To particularly examine the application of the "Direct Entry" process to ascertain whether the intended transparency of the project has been compromised.

Direct Entry of results was used at Coventry in a way, which was not intended by the national Technical Working Group. However, we understand both the time and resource pressures, which led its adoption and we do not consider that it adversely affected the outcomes of the exercise. We recommend that its use cease for all future new evaluations (we understand this has already been agreed) and, if practicable, for appeals.

4. To attempt to determine whether or not the existing hierarchical structure has unduly influenced the process and new pay and grading structure

We are of the view that the existing hierarchical structure did not unduly influence the process or the new grading structure. Organisation charts were used to inform the evaluation process, which is legitimate, rather than to determine outcomes, which would have been illegitimate. Grade information was used to identify apparent anomalies for review, rather than to influence the actual evaluation.

During our review of a sample of more than 20 jobs over which queries had been raised, we found two amendments to original factor evaluations, which looked as though they might have been determined by the existing hierarchy, but in each case a satisfactory explanation was provided in terms of evaluation procedure or consistency checking.

5. The review will seek to determine if the process has been carried out in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner, maintaining integrity and transparency as demanded by the national agreement

We found no evidence of bias or discrimination in the exercise. Job analysts, evaluation panel and review panel members were all thoroughly trained, they kept good records of their decision making processes and worked extremely well together in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. All of these features are consistent with the principles of the National Agreement.

6. The review process will require interviews to be carried out with a cross section of members of the Job Evaluation Panels, the Review Panel and the trade union and management representatives of the Joint Negotiating Group. It will be at the discretion of the review team to interview where they see appropriate either trade union representatives and or individual employees involved in completing the job evaluation exercise.

We interviewed job analysts, evaluation and review panel members, as requested, and were most grateful for the degree of co-operation and assistance we received, in what must have been a challenging situation for those concerned. Between us, we also talked to members of both sides of the Joint Negotiating Group. We agreed that we did not need to interview individual employees, as we were able to obtain answers to all of our questions without needing to do this. We were also concerned that a small number of employee interviewees would inevitably provide an unrepresentative sample.

7. All relevant documentation will be examined to ensure a clear and auditable trail of decision making and moderation by the JE and Review Panels

We examined all of the published documentation for the exercise and considered this to be of high quality. We also reviewed in detail more than 20 job packs. In general, these were of high standard with all amendments to original evaluations noted and dated. There were one or two gaps, which seemed to arise from changes late in the exercise, when everyone was under great pressure. We are recommending that all notes and records be brought together into the job packs to ensure a full audit trail for every evaluation result.

8. To health check the local conventions to confirm that they are not discriminatory

We have reviewed the 3 sets of local conventions and can confirm that they are not discriminatory of themselves. The current set of conventions is consistent in nature and style with those we have seen used in other local authorities.

Whilst we understand the inevitability of evolving processes in a large and complex organisation such as the City Council, we consider it regrettable that the current set of local conventions was not developed and in use at an earlier stage of the proceedings, as this would have saved a lot of effort and resource. However, they are now published so that future evaluations should be carried out more efficiently and transparently than may have been the case during the implementation exercise.

9. To determine whether the split between SMT in Hay and the rest of the workforce in Single Status has impacted on the outcomes

From the data we have seen, it is apparent that there is a clear step in demand (and pay) between those jobs at the top of the NJC JES and the Chief Officer group of jobs covered by the Hay system. We recommend a jointly agreed formal procedure for dealing with jobs at

the top of the NJC structure and the bottom of the Hay structure (essentially that they be evaluated on both schemes and that there is a clear process for dealing with outcomes)

10. To ensure the process has been carried out consistently including the job analysis process

We are of the opinion that the process has been carried out consistently, in that procedures for checking consistency have been developed over the exercise and that the end results are consistent. This includes the job analysis process. There have clearly been differences of style between job analysts, but this is inevitable. All were following the same broad format and met regularly to develop consistency. Any inconsistencies arising from analysis have been resolved during evaluation and review stages.

11. To undertake a quality check of the process for a sample of jobs, which will be identified by the review team, management and trade unions

We have reviewed a sample of 24 jobs identified as queries by the local parties. These included 'vertical' slices within functional groups (e.g. Social Work). Over 300 factor evaluations, we found only two apparent inconsistencies, which represents a very low error rate and a very high level of consistency. One apparent inconsistency resulted from an information gap, which has been filled to our satisfaction. The other arises from the application of the local conventions.

This does not mean that there are no errors in evaluation, but it does indicate that any errors should be capable of resolution through the normal appeals process.

12. A report on the process will be submitted and the authors will be available for explanation and examination

This summary of conclusions and recommendations in relation to the terms of reference constitutes the final section of our report. We are happy to provide further explanation as required.

**David Butler, Independent Consultant, approved by National Joint Council
Sue Hastings, Independent Consultant, National Adviser to the Trade Union side on
Job Evaluation**

4th February 2005

A REPORT ON A REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT NJC JES EXERCISE CARRIED OUT BY COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

Introduction

After an unsuccessful attempt to introduce a new grading and pay structure based on a local government NJC JES exercise in the late 1990s, work resumed in 2001. A benchmark sample of around 100 jobs was evaluated to test the Gauge system and begin the process of developing local help text. Following a review by the Joint Negotiating Group (JNG) changes to processes were agreed to lead into a full pilot exercise during which the original sample was re-evaluated plus a further 80 jobs, bringing the total to 180. The Gauge system was then rolled out to cover a further 1600 jobs over the course of 2003-4.

Proposals for a new grading and pay structure based on the results of the exercise was negotiated with the trade unions and put to the employees in a ballot in October 2004. The proposals were rejected by the workforce. Feedback suggested that some part of employees' discontent was attributable to the job evaluation exercise.

It was agreed that a joint review be carried out by independent advisers, with the following terms of reference:

Terms of Reference – Job Evaluation Process Review

1. To carry out an independent and objective review of the job evaluation process undertaken by Coventry City Council
2. The review to determine whether the process has been carried out in accordance with the joint advice of part 4 of the National Agreement thereby maintaining the integrity of the job evaluation scheme
3. To particularly examine the application of the "Direct Entry" process to ascertain whether the intended transparency of the project has been compromised.
4. To attempt to determine whether or not the existing hierarchical structure has unduly influenced the process and new pay and grading structure
5. The review will seek to determine if the process has been carried out in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner, maintaining integrity and transparency as demanded by the national agreement
6. The review process will require interviews to be carried out with a cross section of members of the Job Evaluation Panels, the Review Panel and the trade union and management representatives of the Joint Negotiating Group. It will be at the discretion of the review team to interview where they see appropriate either trade union representatives and or individual employees involved in completing the job evaluation exercise.

7. All relevant documentation will be examined to ensure a clear and auditable trail of decision making and moderation by the JE and Review Panels
8. To health check the local conventions to confirm that they are not discriminatory
9. To determine whether the split between SMT in Hay and the rest of the workforce in Single Status has impacted on the outcomes
10. To ensure the process has been carried out consistently including the job analysis process
11. To undertake a quality check of the process for a sample of jobs, which will be identified by the review team, management and trade unions
12. A report on the process will be submitted and the authors will be available for explanation and examination

This is the report of the review. Its authors are very grateful to all those who assisted, by providing written information or being interviewed. We received a high degree of co-operation throughout what must have been a challenging process to many.

Brief Chronology

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 2002-3: | Pilot exercise using Gauge computerised version of NJC JES. Original sample re-evaluated plus further 80 jobs, 180 in total. Joint departmental panels set up to identify job groups and to select individuals for interview. |
| 2003 April: | Main exercise commenced, due to be completed by December 2003 with a view to implementation in April 2004. 12 analysts were appointed and trained. |
| 2004 June: | Programme of interviews and evaluations behind schedule, concerns arising from pay modelling process. Joint agreement to use Direct Entry to input amendments to Gauge provisional evaluations. |
| 2004 Sept.: | Proposals published. Employees each sent two packs, one giving details of proposed terms and conditions, one giving job evaluation details, including factor evaluation, overview and question trace. |
| 2004 Oct: | Ballot: proposals rejected by 2:1 overall. |

SECTION A - PROCEDURES

The nationally agreed documentation on the Local Government NJC JES sets out principles for implementation – single status, jointness, equality, openness - but does not prescribe detailed procedures. The detailed procedures agreed at Coventry City Council are set out below, followed by our comments on them.

Local Conventions

Nationally agreed conventions on the interpretation of the scheme and the computer questions are built into the Gauge system as national help screens. The system requires local conventions to be agreed for certain factors, such as monetary values, and allows additional local help text to be developed for most questions.

A number of changes to local help text were agreed following the benchmark exercise. These were supplemented in practice by additional agreements between job analysts reached at their own weekly meetings and those with evaluation panel members. These meetings were established to consolidate practice and ensure levels of consistency in application of the scheme.

Revised local conventions, which clarified the definition of 'whole' and 'specific specialist areas', were agreed with the evaluation panel in the spring to summer of 2004, when it became apparent to those who had been working on the grading and pay structure that the results were not delivering sensible outcomes.

A further revised set of local conventions upon which all of the final evaluations have been based, taking into account all experience to date, has been developed and has been published on the Coventry CC website.

Comments

It is apparent that during the process considerable work has been carried out jointly to develop sound local conventions and these have been under review during the process, as evidenced by the revisions/amendments made in the light of experience. Review of the job packs confirms that revisions/amendments have been applied retrospectively to earlier evaluations.

With hindsight it can be seen that it would have been helpful if all of the detailed local conventions now available had been developed earlier in the process. However, because of the relatively small number of people actively involved in the process, who operated consistently, we are of the view that this did not adversely affect the exercise or the evaluation outcomes.

As the pay modelling process progressed, it was identified that the conventions in relation to the Knowledge and Initiative & Independence factors were contributing to the difficulties experienced in developing a sensible pay model due to compression of scores within a limited range of factor levels. Unfortunately, this was not properly identified until the summer of 2004 and meant a lot of re-working of evaluations to give more sensible results.

Analysis of the final scores identifies that in 12 out of the 13 factors, scores have been achieved at minimum and maximum levels, the exception being Initiative and Independence where the maximum level attained is 6, with level 8 being the highest. The continued 'non use' of levels 7 & 8 was as a result of the view taken locally that neither the "Green Book" factor level definitions nor the equivalent questions in Gauge software that derived the score at these levels, were relevant to any of the posts within the City Council's structures that fell within the remit of the scheme. There is no evidence to indicate an attempt to artificially cap this factor for any other reason.

We have not received any comments during our interviews or discussions indicating any gender or other bias in the local conventions.

It was suggested to us that those current conventions that are based on the local understanding of the Green Book version of the scheme, might be difficult to convert into Gauge help screens, which would achieve the same outcomes, particularly in relation to the Knowledge factor. We are aware that the Authority are currently undertaking this exercise. If, on testing, making the necessary adjustments proves difficult, we suggest that the Authority considers inviting the Pilat job evaluation consultants who were responsible for designing the Gauge system to provide assistance.

Job Analysis

For the main exercise, 12 analyst/facilitators were appointed from both outside and inside the authority on short term contracts. They were trained in the scheme itself and use of the Gauge system. They worked to a schedule in which blocks of analyst time were allocated to each of the 5 directorates and the detailed programme was drawn up by the directorates. Job interviews were attended by the selected jobholder, the job family manager, the allocated trade union representative and the analyst. JNC members and advisers were allowed to sit in to observe.

Prior to the interview, the job family manager was required to complete a Job Interview Preparation Form (JIPF), providing information about main job tasks and answers to key questions taken from the pivotal questions in the Gauge system. The document was discussed and agreed with job family members at meetings held for that purpose and was subsequently used as the basis for discussion in the interview. Trade Union representatives attended job family meetings and the majority of JE interviews.

The analyst training included asking interviewees to describe a typical day. During the interview discussion, the analyst asked questions and provided advice on answering questions, based on the job documentation. Where there was disagreement among those present as to how any Gauge question should be answered, the jobholder's view was adopted as the default position, but the analyst recorded the views of self and others in the Gauge comments box.

Examples relevant to most of the 'key' question answers were also supposed to be entered into the comments box. Random sampling of the job packs, supported by evidence of evaluation panel members, indicates that practice on this varied between analysts.

Interviews took from around 2 to 5 hours. Some had to be re-scheduled to a second session for completion.

Comments:

All of the above is in accordance with recommended procedures for use of the Gauge local government system. The possible exception is the default to the jobholder's answer. Although mechanisms were established to correct any evaluations errors resulting from this procedure, this made a great deal of work for the evaluation panel and possibly raised interviewee expectations in an unfortunate way. We understand that the local parties are reviewing this practice in light of experience and support such a course of action. We are of the view that most questions about jobs should be resolved in interview with job analysts.

The interviews took longer than would ideally be the case with the Gauge system, but it is clearly better to complete the process to the satisfaction of the jobholder and job family manager than to terminate abruptly.

It was put to us from a number of viewpoints that the analysts operated differently from each other. This must be mainly the result of differences of style and personality. This is inevitable. It is only of concern if it achieves different outcomes. From our review of evaluations (see below), we could not see that this was the case, mainly because of the number of subsequent checks on the analysis process.

Evaluation Panel

It was agreed locally that all provisional evaluations from the Gauge analysis stage would be subject to review by a joint evaluation panel. There were 3 panels. Each panel consisted of 1 management side (HR) member and 1 TU side nominee. It was clear from talking to them that they had come to operate as a pool, working in pairs but consulting with other pool members, as necessary.

Panel members were trained in the Green Book version of the NJC JES and in how the Gauge system operates. They had access to the Gauge question library as well as to the national and local help text.

Their role was to check each Gauge provisional evaluation and to make adjustments, where necessary, on the basis of the available information and their knowledge of the Green Book and Gauge versions of the scheme. From an information perspective, they had access to the job pack, including:

- The Job Description (where available)
- The JIPF completed by the job family manager;
- The provisional Gauge factor score, overview and question trace resulting from the interview
- Examples and analyst notes from the Gauge comments boxes

Where this information was insufficient to allow a reasonable assessment, the panel requested the attendance of the original interviewee, job family manager and TU rep to answer further questions. This was a significant logistical exercise and, as it became apparent that this procedure could not be sustained over the number of queries arising and all the jobs to be evaluated, the approach was modified to incorporate e-mail or telephone contacts, where necessary.

Around August 2003, informed by information about the distribution of factor outcomes, the Evaluation Panel became aware that there was a version of Gauge with some changes to the Mental Demands factor and smaller changes to the Mental Skills, Emotional Demands and Working Conditions factors. All completed evaluations were reviewed and amended to take into account these changes. This involved contacting interviewees and re-working through question traces with them.

During the pilot exercise and for most of the main exercise, the Evaluation Panel completed a form, which was returned to the relevant analyst, indicating, not only what they considered to be the appropriate factor level, but also the Gauge question needing alteration. The analyst made the necessary amendments.

When Direct Entry was agreed, in summer 2004 (see further comments below), this ceased and the analysts were instructed only on the amended factor levels to be input using the direct entry override system.

Evaluation Panels dealt with jobs as they were passed to them by analysts, so in a relatively random fashion. Early in 2004, the Evaluation Panels began to appreciate that the evaluation results were not internally consistent. They started to develop charts, which they called 'legs', showing the evaluations in occupational and departmental groups, to assist them in achieving consistency.

By May 2004, evaluation results were being fed into the developing grading and pay structure model. Those working on this aspect of the review recognised that the results were problematic. A joint review was taken with the Review Panel and JNG members, using organisation charts and current grades and pay information. Amongst other inconsistencies, this highlighted that the local conventions had not been making full use of the scheme levels, for example, levels 7 and 8 on the Knowledge factor. Following this, the Evaluation Panel effectively amended the local conventions to make greater use of the top factor levels and re-reviewed all jobs as appropriate.

Review Panel

The review panel had 6 members, 1 from each of the recognised trade union plus 3 management side members, 2 of whom were constant, but with one position varying in membership over the course of the exercise. The Review Panel was facilitated by the Technical Adviser/ Project Manager to the exercise.

The Review Panel's initial task was to report on the pilot exercise, which it did in July 2002. It also conducted a consistency check using the advice from the quality checking circular published as a Joint Circular (and subsequently to become a Technical Note).

Once the main exercise commenced in April 2003, the role of the Review Panel was to review the work of the Evaluation Panel. The Review Panel met weekly for one afternoon initially, but increasing to up to one and a half days per week when the volume of evaluations was greatest.

At first the Review Panel considered every evaluated job pack and raised queries, as they considered necessary, with the Evaluation Panel, who would either amend the evaluation or present evidence to the Review Panel as to why the evaluation should stand. This led to some evaluations being referred back and forth between the JE and review panels before they were resolved.

As the volume of evaluations increased, the Review Panel agreed to take a more stand-back approach and to use spreadsheets of the results, rather than the job packs. They acquired first organisation charts and then information about grades and used this to assist in identifying 'sore thumbs', that is, those jobs which have come out significantly differently from that which may have been expected, to be referred back to the Evaluation Panel.

This development caused some difficulties with the Evaluation Panel, who often did not understand why a job had been referred back to them. This continued until the Evaluation Panel also acquired organisation charts, so they could understand problems such as the subordinate job evaluating higher than the supervisor or manager job.

The Review Panel's ultimate role was to 'sign off' evaluations and the associated documentation, so that this could be sent out to jobholders. In practice, its members had some difficulties with doing this as they went along and this was only done for all evaluations en masse at the end of the exercise (see Communications, below).

Job Families, Like Jobs and Shared Jobs

Jobs to be evaluated were identified by joint departmental panels, with support from departmental HR advisers. These were called job families. For large job families up to 25 'sample interviews' were undertaken. The Evaluation Panel then determined a best fit evaluation to apply to all family members.

Where similar jobs occurred across departments, for example, clerical and secretarial, cook and cleaner jobs, it was agreed to deal with them generically. They were then called 'like jobs'. The diversity of clerical, secretarial and administrative jobs was recognised and therefore, job descriptions were obtained and a joint 'like jobs' panel grouped them into jobs with similar profiles. Following this, every unique job (i.e. every job with a different job description) went through a Job Evaluation Interview to establish if the 'job family grouping' was correct. This exercise led to jobholders being re-grouped accordingly, with the result of increasing the number of job families and refining the profiles. The project manager and a trade union member of the review panel developed 'best fit' evaluations. Job profiles were drawn up for each 'like jobs' and relevant employees allocated to the profiles. These were then sampled for Gauge interviews, as for other jobs. However, they were not reviewed by the Evaluation Panels in the same way as for other jobs.

Where a single job could occur across departments, for example, HR adviser, accountant, legal adviser, these were treated as a single central job family but one jobholder from each directorate was interviewed. These were called 'shared' jobs.

Comments

The system for identifying jobs for evaluation on a departmental basis sounds eminently sensible and there do not appear to have been any problems with it, nor with the way shared jobs were dealt with.

It also makes good sense to deal generically with instances of similar jobs across departments. It is clear that potential difficulties in relation to the grouping of individual clerical and administrative jobs into generic profiles (i.e. job families) were identified at an early stage of the process. We are told that procedures were established to try to ensure allocation to the correct job families. We are also informed that due to issues arising from the later identification of anomalies over the 'like jobs', the appeals process incorporates a specific provision to address the issue of allocation to a specific job family.

Use of Organisation Charts

The use or non-use of organisation charts was commented on by many of those interviewed and seems to have been seen as something of an 'issue'.

After the pilot it was agreed that analysts should use organisation charts to understand the 'positioning' of the post in the relevant organisation structure. However, the evaluation panel in particular, but also others actively involved in the exercise did not have access to organisation charts, to prevent current position in the organisation from influencing their judgements. There is also the added practical problem that maintaining centrally up-to-date accurate organisation charts is extremely difficult in a large, diverse and constantly changing authority.

The Evaluation Panel conducted most of the main exercise without the aid of organisation charts and only started using them during 2004, when it became apparent that the previous approach had led to some inconsistencies.

The Review Panel had also started off not using organisation charts, but had realised at a relatively early stage (Autumn 2003) that they could not take a proper overview of outcomes without the assistance of such charts and, later, of grading and pay information.

Comments

There is a problem with the use of organisation charts if they are allowed to determine the evaluation of jobs, either wholly or partially. However, in a large and diverse organisation, where no one group can be expected to have within it knowledge of all departments, their use is considered acceptable, as long as they are used to inform the process rather than to control it.

It was clear from discussing the issue with interviewees that organisation charts were used to inform the process rather than to unduly influence or dominate it.

'Direct Entry'

In April 2004, the national joint Technical Working Group on the Local Government NJC JES published one of a series of Technical Notes, No. 4 on options for dealing with non-benchmark jobs. Appendix 3 to this paper described a method of direct entry onto the Gauge records for jobs, which had not been fully evaluated using the system.

Management and unions at Coventry CC agreed to use the direct entry system to speed up the process by avoiding the need to re-work the question trace for any amendments made by the Evaluation Panel. This impacted on the question trace by deleting the existing data. The adoption of direct entry helped to ease time pressures but left a difficulty over whether to stand by an earlier commitment to issue the question trace (with the record of direct entry shown) or to publish the job evaluation results without any supporting evidence. We were informed that the decision to use Direct Entry was made on a balance of the risks and consequences, in the knowledge that a full audit trail of 'hard copy' question trace's and job overviews was retained within the job packs.

Comments

The Direct Entry procedure was intended for situations where some jobs had been factor matched, rather than fully evaluated, and not for entering revisions to provisional Gauge evaluations, as it was used at Coventry. The Technical Note is clear on this point. It says: "Direct entry should NOT be used to change a level for a factor that has been established for a job through the normal question/answer process, as this would destroy the integrity of the system. This applies even where a Moderation, Audit or Review Panel decides that a factor level is inappropriate." Advice was sought from national level and the approach of the Technical Note confirmed.

The use of the direct entry procedure for amending Gauge provisional evaluations was not in accordance with national guidance. However, the more important point is to understand why the pressures had become such that the parties felt obliged to use this procedure. This is considered in the overall comments below.

In our view all future evaluations should revert to the original procedure where any changes agreed by the Evaluation Panel are re-worked through a revised question trace.

Consistency Checking

Whatever job evaluation system is used and whether computerised or paper based, checking the consistency of the initial evaluation results is crucial to achieving fair outcomes. The aim of any job evaluation exercise is to compare the relative demands of jobs within the group being evaluated. This is usually done, as with the Local Government NJC JES, by comparing each job against a common set of criteria, the factor plan. However, it is also necessary to check that this process gives sensible results across jobs. Because of the importance of consistency checking, the national Technical Working Group produced guidance on this aspect of job evaluation, which was published as a Joint Circular in September 2002 and is available on the Employers Organisation website.

The Coventry City Council Review Panel's main function was to review the consistency of evaluations across jobs. It did this for both the pilot exercise, on which it produced a report in July 2002, and for the main exercise. The Review Panel also used the national guidance note to analyse the pilot exercise outcomes and produced table and graphs showing the distribution of results for each factor.

The Evaluation Panel started systematically checking its own consistency in the spring of 2004, when it had sufficient results to see that there were some anomalous outcomes within occupational groups.

As identified earlier in this report, more consistency checking and consequential re-evaluation were undertaken over the summer of 2004 when it became apparent that the developing pay model had identified some areas of concern. As a result, a 'peer group' check of the outcomes was undertaken with the review panel and members of the JNG in order to identify the issues and the causal factors. Organisation charts were used to inform the process. External advice was also taken at this juncture and as a result some of the local conventions were reviewed.

Towards the end of the exercise, in August to September 2004, the provisional results were circulated to Directorate managers and the JNC with a request for obvious anomalies or apparently perverse outcomes to be identified. These jobs were re-reviewed by both the Evaluation Panel and Review Panel and some changes made following appropriate investigation.

By the end of this series of checking and review processes both the Evaluation Panel and the Review Panel were satisfied that they had achieved consistent outcomes.

Comments

It is perhaps unfortunate that more rigorous consistency checking was not undertaken by the Evaluation and Review Panels at an earlier stage, as this led to more work and greater changes at a relatively late stage in the exercise than would otherwise have been the case. However we are satisfied that appropriate methods were used and that thorough consistency checking had been undertaken by the end of the exercise in September 2004.

In order to check our conclusions from our assessment of the consistency checking procedures we fully reviewed the job packs for 24 discrete jobs, which had been identified to us as potential problem areas. Of the 300+ separate factor evaluations within these jobs we found only 2 possible inconsistencies, one due to the application of the local conventions (see above) and one to an 'information gap'. The evidence for the latter has subsequently been explained to us. This represents a very high level of consistency if applicable across all jobs.

Inevitably in an organisation of this complexity, this does not mean that there are no inconsistencies or inaccurate factor evaluations throughout the whole process but we are confident that these can be adequately and properly dealt with through the proposed appeals process.

Because of the nature of the approach adopted, the 'like jobs' were less rigorously consistency checked than other jobs as a result of the 'allocation' process. This is likely to have resulted in more anomalies than with other jobs, especially in relation to the clerical 'like jobs', where the large number of profiles means that there is more scope for misallocation of an individual employee. However, this is recognised within the proposed appeals procedure. We are of the view that any such anomalies are capable of resolution through the appeals process, which expressly recognises the allocation of 'like jobs' as an appeals issue.

Communication of Results to Jobholders

It was agreed at the outset of the exercise that the whole process would be as transparent as possible to bolster employee credibility after the previous unsuccessful exercise. This included a commitment that employees would each receive the evaluation factor score, Gauge overview and question trace for their job family once the evaluation of their job had been signed off by the Review Panel.

Because of the reluctance of the Review Panel to sign off individual evaluations, in part due to emerging inconsistencies in early outcomes during the main exercise, this did not happen and it was agreed that all evaluations and supporting documentation would be disclosed to employees at the end of the exercise following a final overall review by the Review Panel.

As a result there was a gap, often of many months, between the original jobholder interviews and receipt of the job packs. The use of direct entry also meant that employees often did not receive the original question trace and overview for their job, as intended, but a version which included references to some factors having been input through direct entry, with no supporting evidence.

Comments

The EOC Code of Practice on Equal Pay says that pay structures should be 'transparent' to the employees they cover. The national agreement on implementing the local government NJC JES recommends openness. There are trends towards increasing transparency in public sector pay.

However, the principle needs to be tempered by what is realistic. With hindsight the commitment to publish Gauge overviews and question traces to all employees can be seen to have been impractical and to have led to a potential credibility gap. An agreement in principle to be as transparent as possible and then to decide each issue on a case by case basis might have led to a better overall outcome.

Link with Hay Evaluated Jobs

In accordance with our terms of reference we have also explored the 'split' (i.e. the relationship) between the Hay Scheme for Chief Officer related posts and the NJC JES. The former is used within the City Council for posts from Chief Executive down to Assistant Director level, in accordance with the provisions of the Joint National Council Agreements.

Where two schemes are used within one organisation, areas of potential 'overlap', where the overall 'job size' may be comparable, require procedures to be established to ensure that individual jobs are correctly positioned within the overall pay structure, bearing in mind the provisions of the equal pay legislation.

Whilst there is no formally agreed procedure within Coventry for undertaking dual evaluations (i.e. assessing posts under both schemes), we have been informed that such exercises have been undertaken and given details of examples arising from recent restructure exercises.

Comments

The information provided indicates that there is a clear justification for the 'break' between the two schemes.

Overall we conclude, therefore, that the continued use of the Hay Scheme at a senior managerial level has not impacted upon the implementation of the NJC JES.

Overall Comments on Procedures

All of the above procedures are consistent with national guidance and the intentions of the NJC JES.

It is apparent that the Gauge system has been used as an information gathering tool and that the actual evaluations were in practice carried out by the Evaluation Panel and then reviewed by the Review Panel. There is nothing wrong with this and, although time consuming, has much to commend it in terms of thoroughness.

SECTION B - EVALUATION OUTCOMES

In order to determine whether the exercise had been carried out in a fair, objective and non-discriminatory manner, we examined the procedures used – see Section A above.

However, we have also considered the outcomes of the exercise in the light of our combined experience of use of the Local Government NJC JES by other authorities. We did this in a number of ways.

Review of Overall Rank Order

We examined the rank order of jobs and factor scores, as published on the Authority's intranet, and compared them with other exercises of our experience. Inevitably, such an exercise focuses on jobs, which occur commonly across local authorities, and is very dependent on job titles reflecting actual jobs.

Comment

In making an overall assessment we do not find any specific areas of concern. The general patterns of posts that benefit from the application of an objective job measurement process are consistent with both expectations and our experience. This view is confirmed both by information we have been provided with that identifies the shifts (i.e. increases / decreases) in basic pay and overall remuneration and the summary of the impact upon largely populated job families.

Review of Evaluations of a Sample of Jobs

We supplemented the review of overall results by examining the evaluations of a sample of jobs, identified by the parties as having queries associated with them for one reason or another. We worked through the job packs and evaluations for 24 jobs and, where possible, compared them with the evaluation results for other similar jobs to ensure that they were typical of the job family.

Comments

There was a clear audit trail through from the original provisional Gauge evaluation to the final outcomes for all the jobs examined. This was true, even where the published Gauge overview and question trace recorded a level arrived at by Direct Entry, as there was usually an Evaluation Panel record of the changes made and the reasons for them. The few exceptions related to changes, which appeared to have been made as a result of Review Panel highlighting of anomalies on the spreadsheets from which they worked towards the end of the exercise. There were generally accompanying notes to these, but it appears that in a minority of cases these may have got lost or destroyed. It would be helpful for the future, if Review Panel notes could be transferred to the relevant job packs and any gaps filled.

More importantly, our analysis of this relatively small sample group showed a very high level of consistency both across similar jobs and with the scheme itself.

SECTION C – SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, our conclusions and recommendations related to the terms of reference for the review are as follows:

Terms of Reference – Job Evaluation Process Review

1. Carry out an independent and objective review of the job evaluation process undertaken by Coventry City Council

We have carried out a review, as requested, of both the procedures adopted at Coventry City Council and the evaluation outcomes.

2. The review to determine whether the process has been carried out in accordance with the joint advice of part 4 of the National Agreement thereby maintaining the integrity of the job evaluation scheme

In the light of this review, we are satisfied that the evaluation exercise in Coventry was carried out in accordance with the principles of part 4 of the National Agreement and that the integrity of the scheme has been maintained.

We have some reservations about some aspects of the procedures adopted locally, for example, on Direct Entry (see below), and the ‘default to jobholder’ where there is disagreement in analysis interviews; and we are recommending that these be reconsidered. However, we do not believe that these adversely affected the evaluation outcomes in any serious way and certainly not in ways that cannot be resolved through the normal appeals process.

3. To particularly examine the application of the "Direct Entry" process to ascertain whether the intended transparency of the project has been compromised.

Direct Entry of results was used at Coventry in a way, which was not intended by the national Technical Working Group. However, we understand both the time and resource pressures, which led its adoption and we do not consider that it adversely affected the outcomes of the exercise. We recommend that its use cease for all future new evaluations (we understand this has already been agreed) and, if practicable, for appeals.

4. To attempt to determine whether or not the existing hierarchical structure has unduly influenced the process and new pay and grading structure

We are of the view that the existing hierarchical structure did not unduly influence the process or the new grading structure. Organisation charts were used to inform the evaluation process, which is legitimate, rather than to determine outcomes, which would have been illegitimate. Grade information was used to identify apparent anomalies for review, rather than to influence the actual evaluation.

During our review of a sample of more than 20 jobs over which queries had been raised, we found two amendments to original factor evaluations, which looked as though they might have been determined by the existing hierarchy, but in each case a satisfactory explanation was provided in terms of evaluation procedure or consistency checking.

5. The review will seek to determine if the process has been carried out in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner, maintaining integrity and transparency as demanded by the national agreement

We found no evidence of bias or discrimination in the exercise. Job analysts, evaluation panel and review panel members were all thoroughly trained, they kept good records of their decision making processes and worked extremely well together in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. All of these features are consistent with the principles of the National Agreement.

6. The review process will require interviews to be carried out with a cross section of members of the Job Evaluation Panels, the Review Panel and the trade union and management representatives of the Joint Negotiating Group. It will be at the discretion of the review team to interview where they see appropriate either trade union representatives and or individual employees involved in completing the job evaluation exercise.

We interviewed job analysts, evaluation and review panel members, as requested, and were most grateful for the degree of co-operation and assistance we received, in what must have been a challenging situation for those concerned. Between us, we also talked to members of both sides of the Joint Negotiating Group. We agreed that we did not need to interview individual employees, as we were able to obtain answers to all of our questions without needing to do this. We were also concerned that a small number of employee interviewees would inevitably provide an unrepresentative sample.

7. All relevant documentation will be examined to ensure a clear and auditable trail of decision making and moderation by the JE and Review Panels

We examined all of the published documentation for the exercise and considered this to be of high quality. We also reviewed in detail more than 20 job packs. In general, these were of high standard with all amendments to original evaluations noted and dated. There were one or two gaps, which seemed to arise from changes late in the exercise, when everyone was under great pressure. We are recommending that all notes and records be brought together into the job packs to ensure a full audit trail for every evaluation result.

8. To health check the local conventions to confirm that they are not discriminatory

We have reviewed the 3 sets of local conventions and can confirm that they are not discriminatory of themselves. The current set of conventions is consistent in nature and style with those we have seen used in other local authorities.

Whilst we understand the inevitability of evolving processes in a large and complex organisation such as the City Council, we consider it regrettable that the current set of local conventions was not developed and in use at an earlier stage of the proceedings, as this would have saved a lot of effort and resource. However, they are now published so that future evaluations should be carried out more efficiently and transparently than may have been the case during the implementation exercise.

9. To determine whether the split between SMT in Hay and the rest of the workforce in Single Status has impacted on the outcomes

From the data we have seen, it is apparent that there is a clear step in demand (and pay) between those jobs at the top of the NJC JES and the Chief Officer group of jobs covered by the Hay system. We recommend a jointly agreed formal procedure for dealing with jobs at the top of the NJC structure and the bottom of the Hay structure (essentially that they be evaluated on both schemes and that there is a clear process for dealing with outcomes)

10. To ensure the process has been carried out consistently including the job analysis process

We are of the opinion that the process has been carried out consistently, in that procedures for checking consistency have been developed over the exercise and that the end results are consistent. This includes the job analysis process. There have clearly been differences of style between job analysts, but this is inevitable. All were following the same broad format and met regularly to develop consistency. Any inconsistencies arising from analysis have been resolved during evaluation and review stages.

11. To undertake a quality check of the process for a sample of jobs, which will be identified by the review team, management and trade unions

We have reviewed a sample of 24 jobs identified as queries by the local parties. These included 'vertical' slices within functional groups (e.g. Social Work). Over 300 factor evaluations, we found only two apparent inconsistencies, which represents a very low error rate and a very high level of consistency. One apparent inconsistency resulted from an information gap, which has been filled to our satisfaction. The other arises from the application of the local conventions.

This does not mean that there are no errors in evaluation, but it does indicate that any errors should be capable of resolution through the normal appeals process.

12. A report on the process will be submitted and the authors will be available for explanation and examination

This summary of conclusions and recommendations in relation to the terms of reference constitutes the final section of our report. We are happy to provide further explanation as required.

David Butler
Sue Hastings

4th February 2005