

MINUTES OF THE OXFORD LIVING WAGE REVIEW GROUP

Tuesday 12 September 2017

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COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Goff, Iley-Williamson, Ladbrooke (Chair), Lloyd-Shogbesan and Thomas.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer)

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair opened the meeting and said that the Review Group should use the time to plan ahead.

3. APOLOGIES

None.

4. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Review Group noted that the Scrutiny Committee had agreed the terms of reference for their review.

5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Panel commented that the first and third clauses of the motion passed by Council in 2007 had been fulfilled but that further progress would be welcome on the second clause, which was about wider promotion of the living wage to ensure that every worker in the city earned a living wage.

The Panel also noted that they were not the first group to push this issue – the Scrutiny Committee and other scrutiny panels had previously made recommendations about promoting the Oxford Living Wage more widely.

6. EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr McManners was not present at the meeting. The Review Group agreed to invite representatives of the following organisations to future meetings:

- The retailer John Lewis
- The major bus companies operating in the city
- A2Dominion property group
- The emerging local living wage campaign
- The Citizens' Advice Bureau

7. PLENARY SESSION

The Review Group thought there would be some merit in focusing promotion of the OLW on employers whose operations are focused on Oxford as they are more likely to have flexibility to vary their wage rates compared to employers who operate across the country.

The Review Group also expressed support for the idea of having an OLW logo with the authority of the Council behind it. It was suggested that the Council could consider allocating funding for 2 years to get a scheme off the ground.

8. LEGAL ADVICE

The Review Group noted the legal advice and agreed to invite a legal officer to a future meeting to further explore what more was possible in terms of encouraging and requiring contractors and subcontractors to pay the Oxford Living Wage and what the risks and constraints were.

9. PAYROLL MODELLING

The Scrutiny Officer explained that at the Chair's request he had sought advice from Payroll about what the cost implications would be of the Council raising minimum salaries to the level of the London Living Wage (£9.75 per hour) and to £10 per hour.

He said the cost of raising wages to £9.75 an hour, including additional pension and National Insurance contributions, would be a maximum of £39,240 per year.

To raise wages to a minimum of £10 per hour would benefit 57 staff and cost a maximum of £76,972 per year.

These figures were in the context of a net budget requirement of approximately £20m and gross annual service expenditure in the order of £80m-£100m (of which about £55m related to employee expenses).

The Review Group also noted that the Council's leisure partner Fusion Lifestyle paid its staff the Oxford Living Wage and made a charge back to the Council but these figures only related to staff employed directly by the Council.

The Review Group also noted that approximately half of the Council's total workforce would be TUPE transferred to the new trading company on their existing terms but that the company may decide in future to offer alternative employment terms to new starters and transferred staff (however there was no suggestion the company would want to pay less than the Oxford Living Wage).

10. CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Review Group requested an online survey asking people about their views on whether they think there should be an Oxford Living Wage and the rates of the OLW, the National Living Wage for over-25s and the rate for under-25s.

The Review Group asked to see the survey and press release before they are issued and suggested that the Chair appears on the local radio.

11. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.15 pm