

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 25 FEBRUARY 2020

Present:

Councillors Emberson, Brock, Page and Stanford-Beale

H Caney	GMB
A Elliott	Unison
A Jemmott	Unison
P Kenny	Unison
K Magee	Unite
A McNamara	National Education Union (NEU)
M Palfrey	Unison, Branch Secretary
B Reynolds	Unison
A Solera	Unison
J Hazell	Committee Services
S Smith	Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Kieran Magee was elected to serve as Chair of the Forum for the remainder the Municipal Year 2020/2021.

2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2019

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 16 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report, that would be submitted to Personnel Committee on 17 March 2021, providing a Pay Policy Statement, attached at Appendix 1, for 2021/22 for approval by Council on 23 March 2021.

The report stated that the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 had been updated with the following changes:

- To show the updated pay multiples in section 8;
- To reflect the changes that had been agreed by Council regarding the senior management structure of the Council;
- Annex B had been reduced by removing extracts lifted from the Constitution and instead provided relevant references as to where the relevant information on the governance arrangements for pay and conditions of service for Council could be found in the Constitution;
- Annex D (council employees in salary bands) had been updated with data for 1 April 2020 and paragraph 10 (Pay Profile) had been updated to reflect this.

The report explained that further updates might be required to the Pay Policy Statement, such as new pay scales and pay ratios and new employer contribution rates for the Local Government Pension Scheme, after discussions between national employers and joint trade unions had been concluded. Delegated authority was sought

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for the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Corporate and Consumer Service, to make these updates.

The report also explained the legislation which governed local authorities in developing their Pay Policy Statement, as set out in the Localism Act 2011, as well as relevant guidance on the publication of the organisation's pay.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised the Forum that it was likely that any news about the pay award would not be received until after the May 2021 elections.

AGREED -

That, subject to Personnel Committee's consideration of the report at its meeting on 17 March 2021, the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 would be recommended to Council on 23 March 2021 for approval, be noted.

4. EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report providing the Forum with an update on the work being done to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council. These included the following actions:

- Promotion of the Equality Audit for 2019/20 - promoted to staff through the Chief Executive's weekly email and on the intranet.
- Signing the Business in the Community's (BITC) Race at Work Charter in November 2020 - an initiative designed to improve outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees in the UK. Partner organisations had received a letter from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to confirm that the Council had signed the Charter and set out the organisation's commitment to ensure that the Council was an employer that showed leadership and ambition in employment and equality.
- Commissioning Business in the Community (BITC) to review the Council's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. As part of this process, BITC would be carrying out a review of the Council's policies, processes and initiatives through interviews with key stakeholders, as well as running five staff focus groups - each providing an opportunity for 10-12 colleagues to come together to discuss their perceptions and experiences of inclusion at the Council. The focus groups had been advertised in the Chief Executive's email on the intranet.
- Cultural Unity, Diversity and Inclusion network - the first meeting of a group of staff from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds had taken place on 10 December 2020; the group was currently considering their terms of reference and key areas of interest.
- Health and Ethical Workplace - instigation by the Director of Social Care and Health of a culture change programme running over two years within the directorate. The Organisational Development (OD) and Learning team within HR was supporting the roll out of the culture change programme, which was due to begin in May 2021. Members of the HR and OD team had also received

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training and support from Ethical Reading to be able to deliver the Healthy and Ethical Workplace workshops in other directorates.

The report also presented the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report for 2020, attached to the report at Appendix 1, for comment, before it was due to be submitted to Personnel Committee on 17 March 2021. Appendix 1 showed that the mean gender pay gap was 4.71% and the median was 2.53%. This was based on data at the snapshot date of 31 March 2020. Overall, the Council's pay gap figures and median gender pay gap figures compared well to other local authorities.

Finally, the report explained that the Council was also due to publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for the first time this year. The report was to be presented to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 2 March 2021 and then to the Joint Trade Unions for comment, before the final report was submitted to Personnel Committee on 17 March 2021.

The report set out the next steps in terms of creating a Team Reading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan so as to enable more effective monitoring and reporting to CMT and Personnel Committee. The Plan would be created using insights from the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion audit findings, as well as the Equality Audit 2019/20 and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports.

AGREED -

- (1) That the progress made to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council be noted.
- (2) That the Gender Pay Gap Report for 2020 be noted.
- (3) That the Forum notes that the Council will publish an Ethnicity Pay Gap report for 2020 which will be presented to Personnel Committee on 17 March 2021.

5. JOINT STATEMENT BY THE UNIONS REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO STAFF'S TERMS AND CONDITIONS

With the agreement of the Forum, M Palfrey read out a statement on behalf of the Unions regarding proposed changes to staff's terms and conditions, and the possible threat that the Council may adopt a "fire and re-hire" approach. In response Councillor Brock gave his assurances that he, on behalf of the Council, would give a full undertaking on the points raised by the Unions in their statement.

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.41 pm).