

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES – 16 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillor McEwan (Chair)
Councillors Brock, Page and Skeats.

Also Present: Kieran Magee, Alison McNamara, Miriam Palfrey and Shella Smith.

Apologies: Councillor Lovelock.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Chief Executive submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 24 February 2022.

13. EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report providing an update on the work being done to advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Council since the previous update that had been submitted to Personnel Committee in March 2021. A copy of the Business in the Community (BITC) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit report – October 2021 was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit recommendations which had been implemented or were in progress as at February 2022 was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report detailed the findings of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit which had been carried out for the Council by BITC and the work that was being done to implement their recommendations. It also provided an update on the Healthy and Ethical Workplace programme which was being delivered in the Directorate of Adult Social Care and Health, in partnership with Ethical Reading which had focused on achieving a vibrant, values based and ethical culture.

The report explained that the findings from the BITC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit would be used alongside the findings of the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 and the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council. It would be co-created with input from a range of stakeholders, with support from an external partner who would be appointed soon.

AGREED –

- (1) **That the progress made to advance Equality, Diversion and Inclusion at the Council since the last update on 17 March 2021 be noted;**
- (2) **That a progress update on the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council be submitted to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee, to be held on 14 July 2022.**

14. GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS FOR 2021 AND WORKFORCE PROFILE REPORT FOR 2020/21

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report for onward submission to Personnel Committee on 16 March 2022, presenting the Council's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021. The following documents were attached to the report:

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Appendix 1 - Gender Pay Gap Report for 2021

Appendix 2 - Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2021

Appendix 3 - Workforce Profile Report for 2020/21.

The report explained that the mean gender pay gap was 2.06%, meaning that women earned 2.06% less per hour, on average, than men. The median gender pay gap was 4.91% and the mean ethnicity pay gap was 4.26%, meaning the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees were paid 4.26% less per hour, on average, than White employees. The median ethnicity pay gap was 5.69% and the report provided a further breakdown of ethnicity pay gaps for different ethnic groups.

The report also presented the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 which provided a summary of equalities monitoring data and trends over time. It covered data on the protected characteristics of the current workforce and job applicants in 2020/21 and compared it to the previous two financial years (2018/19 and 2019/20) where relevant.

The findings from the Workforce Profile for 2020/21 and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2021 would be used alongside the findings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Audit that had been carried out by BITC to inform the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the Council.

AGREED –

(1) That the following reports be noted:

- **Gender Pay Gap Report 2021;**
- **Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021;**
- **Workforce Profile 2021;**

(2) That updated Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports be submitted to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee, to be held on 14 July 2022.

15. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisation Development submitted a report providing a Pay Policy Statement, attached at Appendix 1, for 2022/23 for approval by Council on 22 March 2022.

The report stated that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 had been updated with the following changes:

- Paragraph 5.2 had been updated to reflect the current status of the national pay negotiations for 2021;
- Section 7 had been updated to reflect the new Living Wage Foundation hourly rate which had increased to £9.90. It would be implemented at the Council from 1 April 2022. It might be necessary to pay a Living Wage supplement to staff below this rate, depending on the outcome of the national pay negotiations for 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- New pay multiples in Section 8;
- Annex D (Council employees in salary bands) had been updated with data from 1 April 2021 and Section 10 (Pay Profile) had been updated to reflect this.

The report stated that the majority of employees had not received a cost of living increase since April 2020 as the national pay negotiations for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were ongoing. The National Employers had made a full and final pay offer in July 2021 for a 1.75% increase for Local Government Services staff and Craftworkers and 1.5% to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. The increases would be backdated to 1 April 2021. The three local government unions (UNISON, GMB and Unite) had conducted consultative ballots on the employers' offer which had run through to the beginning of October 2021; all three unions

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had received resounding majorities in favour of rejecting the employers' final offer. In mid-November 2021 UNISON had announced it would be conducting a formal national strike ballot that would close in mid-January 2022. GMB had announced it would be conducting another consultative ballot (in order to determine whether there was support for a subsequent strike ballot) that would close in mid-December 2021. Unite had announced a later timetable: its formal strike ballot would close on 25 February 2022. The result of UNISON's ballot had been 70% in favour of strike action. However, turnout had been 14.5%, short of the minimum 50% required for any industrial action to be lawful. GMB had not proceeded to a formal strike ballot. Unite was still conducting its ballot. In February 2022, the joint Negotiating Committees for Chief Executives and Chief Officers had announced that they had reached agreement to award a 1.5% increase from 1 April 2021.

The delay in agreeing the cost of living pay award for 2021/22 would also impact on the timetable for the 2022/23 pay talks. The three unions were not expected to begin to consult their members on the content of their 2022/23 pay claim until at least March 2022, which meant it was not expected to be tabled until at least April 2022, which would be beyond the usual pay award implementation date of 1 April 2022.

The report explained that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 would need to be updated once the pay negotiations had been conducted for 2021/22 and updated again when they were concluded for 2022/23. The report sought delegated authority for the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, to update the Pay Policy Statement which would require changes throughout to reflect the pay awards in addition to: paragraph 8 to show the new pay multiples and Annex F, the new pay scales.

AGREED – That the Committee recommend

- (1) That the draft Pay Policy 2021/22 be recommended to Council on 22 March 2021 for approval;**
- (2) That Council be recommended to authorise the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services, to update the Pay Policy Statement with new pay scales and pay ratios if required, when the discussions between national employers and joint trade unions had been concluded, in addition to updating the current employers pension contribution figure.**

16. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Further to Minute 8 of the meeting held on 18 November 2021, the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, presenting the Committee with five Employment Policies which had been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. The following documents were attached to the report:

- Appendix A Bullying and Harassment Policy;
- Appendix B Employee Stability Agreement;
- Appendix C Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy;
- Appendix D Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy;
- Appendix E Standby and Call Out Policy.

The report explained that the policies had been reviewed because they did not reflect current best practice or were out of date and hence put the Council at risk, were due to be reviewed in line with the two-year review schedule and had been updated with current job titles and gender-neutral language.

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The report set out the principles that had been in mind when the policies had been written and stated that in future, all employment policies would be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation required it.

The report also included a table which set out in summary terms for each of the revised policies the issues which had been addressed together with additional key changes that had been agreed with the Joint Trades Unions. Once the policy review had been completed, hyperlinks would be added to the policies where they were cross referenced with other policies. The process for agreeing the policies with the Joint Trade Unions was set out in a table and a communications plan had been put in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees.

Resolved:

(1) That the following revised/new HR policies, as set out in in Appendices A to E attached to the report, be approved:

- **Appendix A Bullying and Harassment Policy;**
- **Appendix B Employee Stability Agreement;**
- **Appendix C Relocation and Accommodation Schemes Policy;**
- **Appendix D Shift and Unsocial Hours Allowance Policy;**
- **Appendix E Standby and Call Out Policy.**

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.51pm).