

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 14 JULY 2022

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);
Councillors Brock, Mitchell and Page.

Also Present: Teresa Kaine (via Microsoft Teams), Kieran Magee (for items 2-4) (Unite), Alison McNamara (for items 2-4) (National Education Union) (via Microsoft Teams), Miriam Palfrey (UNISON) (for items 2-4) and Shella Smith.

Apologies: Councillor Lovelock.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 16 March and 16 June 2022 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

3. GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY REPORTS FOR 2022 AND WORKFORCE PROFILE FOR 2021/22

Further to Minute 14 of the meeting held on 16 March 2022, the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted an updated report, presenting the Council's Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports for 2022, based on the position at the snapshot date of 31 March 2022. The report stated that the mean gender pay gap was 0.13% and the median was 3.06% compared with 2.06% and 4.91% in 2021. The mean ethnicity pay gap for 2022 was 2.68%, which meant Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees were paid 2.68% lower than their white colleagues on average. There was a negative median pay gap of 1.76%, meaning that the median pay of white employees was 1.76% less than for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. Both figures had shown improvement since 31 March 2021, when the mean pay gap was 4.26% and the median was 5.69%.

The report also contained a more detailed analysis of ethnic groups, which showed some differences that were masked by the overall figures. Employees from Asian backgrounds and those in 'Other Ethnic' groups had higher average pay than white colleagues. The mean pay gap was largest for employees who identified as Black or Black British, whose pay was 13% lower on average than their white colleagues, followed by employees from Mixed Ethnic backgrounds who were paid 7.4% less than white employees on average.

The report also presented the Workforce Profile for 2021/22 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 2021/22 and compared it with the previous three financial years (2018/19 to 2020/21) where relevant.

The report emphasised the significant benefits for an organisation's reputation, culture and people of taking positive action on workplace equality. The Ethnicity and Gender Pay Gap reports, along with the Workforce Profile, were a fundamental step on the Council's journey to improving workplace equality. It helped to create a baseline to track current progress and drive continual improvement.

The Committee noted that the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap data for Brighter Futures for Children was not currently included in the report and requested if adding these

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statistics could be investigated in the future to enable a wider view of the pay gap to be taken of services for which the Council was responsible.

The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix 1 - Gender Pay Gap Report for 2022
Appendix 2 - Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2022
Appendix 3 - Workforce Profile Report for 2021/22.

Resolved: That the following reports be noted:

- Gender Pay Gap Report 2022, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2022, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- Workforce Profile Report for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

4. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, presenting two Employment Policies which had been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix A Grievance Policy
Appendix B Managing Sickness Absence Policy
Appendix C Equality Impact Assessment

The report explained that the Grievance Policy had been updated to emphasise the need for the investigating manager and HR to support the employee making the complaint, and the person(s) who was the subject of the grievance. The Managing Sickness Absence Policy had been updated to include guidance on how to manage Covid and cases of long Covid. A flow chart detailing the Ill Health Retirement process had been appended to the report for reference.

The report explained that all employment policies had been reviewed by the HR and Organisational Development team, except the Union Facilities Agreement, which it was intended to present to Personnel Committee on 17 November 2022 for approval, following consultation and negotiation with the Joint Trade Unions.

Resolved:

- (1) That the following revised HR policies, as set out in in Appendices A and B to the report, be approved:
 - Grievance Policy;
 - Managing Sickness Absence Policy;
- (2) That the Equality Impact Assessment of the policy reviews be noted, as set out in Appendix C to the report.

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5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

6. REDUNDANCY AND EARLY RETIREMENTS COSTS - 1 OCTOBER 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2022

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, which provided a monitoring statement of all termination costs that had been incurred due to employees leaving the Council on either early retirement or redundancy grounds between 1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021. There had been no early retirements on the grounds of efficiency during this period. Termination costs that had been incurred due to employees leaving the Council on redundancy grounds between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2021 were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Resolved That it be noted that the total termination costs incurred due to employees leaving the Council on redundancy grounds between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 was £77,532.36.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2).

7. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST

The Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development submitted a report, which set out a request for flexible retirement of employee A and the payment of pension benefits through the Local Government Pension Scheme. The proposal, together with the financial implications, was set out in a schedule appended to the report.

Resolved -

- (1) That the flexible retirement of employee A on the terms set out in the schedule appended to the report and the payment of pension benefits through the Local Government Pension Scheme be approved;
- (2) That the proposal be approved on the basis of the financial implications as set out in paragraph 9.1 and Appendix A of the report, and that authority to conclude the individual package be delegated to the Director of Finance, Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development (acting jointly).

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 6.57pm).