

STAFFING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE - MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 6th March 2018

Time: 3.30 p.m.– 4.30p.m.

Place: Room 128, Shire Hall, Cambridge

Present: Councillors P Downes (substituting for Councillor Nethsingha), N Harrison, S Hoy, P Hudson, W Hunt, J Schumann (Chairman) and J Whitehead

Apologies: Councillors L Nethsingha and M McGuire

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23. MINUTES – 31ST OCTOBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Hunt as being present at the meeting.

24. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018-19 AND GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING

The Committee received a report presenting drafts of the Chief Officer Pay Policy Statement and the Gender Pay Gap Report for review, and asking it to recommend that Council agree these documents. Members noted that

- it was a statutory requirement to publish this information on senior employee remuneration and the gender pay gap
- this was the first year that the gender pay gap report was required
- the gender pay gap report, based on pay data as of 31 March 2017, showed both the mean and the median pay gap for the Council to be below a 2017 national public sector pay gap comparator
- the Pay Policy Statement showed the current ratio of the Chief Executive's full salary to the median salary in the organisation to be 1:7, well within the Fair Pay Review 2010's recommendation that the pay ratio should be not more than 1:20
- there had been no change in pay policy decisions since the last annual report, but for clarity, the posts included in Appendix 2a and 2b had changed, and posts shared with Peterborough City council and LGSS posts had been annotated as such.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 5.5-5.9 in the draft report to Council (subsequently published with the agenda for Council on 20 March 2018) which had not been included in the report to the Committee. The Committee noted that

- the Council's recruitment practices already had mechanisms in place to ensure fair selection without gender bias
- the job evaluation tools used ensured that fair and equitable grades were given to all roles, free from gender bias
- learning and development activity was available to all irrespective of working hours and location

- the Chief Executive had commissioned a full review of factors affecting the gender pay gap, and actions to reduce the gap would be sought.

In the course of discussion, members

- noted one member's account of being involved in a review of the pay gap at the University of Cambridge some years ago, when the Labour government before 2010 had required the publication of information on gender and pay. Factors identified as contributing to the pay gap then had included the process for promotion to higher academic posts, the point on the salary scale at which newly-appointed lecturers were paid, and an apparent reluctance of women to apply for promotion. The pay gap for non-academic staff had been less marked
- asked whether the County Council had any earlier comparative data on gender and pay; officers undertook to review what had been done previously

Action required

- drew attention to the presence of more men in the upper pay quartiles, noting that the gender pay gap varied between quartiles
- noted that the numbers of employees given in the workforce profile referred to people, full-time or part-time, rather than being whole-time equivalent figures
- commended the work being done to reduce the gender pay gap
- in relation to the pay multiple, given in Appendix 1 as 1:7, commented that the Chief Executive's shared post represented good value, and noted that the range of pay multiples in local authorities went up to 1:13
- suggested that the salary of officers one tier below Chief Executive might provide useful comparative information
- questioned how many educational psychologist posts were on the list; it was confirmed that the list was individual posts and this example would have been of an employee at the higher end of the national pay scale, which reflected post-holders' experience and training
- suggested that it would aid understanding of the table at Appendix 2a if it was listed that the posts were individual and did not represent groups of jobs
- in relation to the post of 'Consultant Public Health' noted that this was a job title used in the Public Health context, and did not refer to a person brought in as an external consultant in the more common usage of the term 'consultant'
- asked whether the Council employed on a consultancy basis employees who had recently left the organisation. Officers advised that the Council's Consultancy Policy restricted the use of former staff on a consultancy basis. This policy was currently being refreshed, and on completion of the work would be brought to the Staffing and Appeals Committee
- noted that there was no requirement to publish information on payments to consultants, though it was possible to do so provided it was not commercially sensitive. Officers added that differences in employment conditions, such as

entitlement to annual leave, made it difficult to compare rates for consultants and for permanent staff

- asked what use was in practice made of market supplement payments. Officers advised that they were rarely used; the Council had a pay structure which could not simply be changed when the market changed. A recent list of market supplements had shown a total of ten such payments. They were only ever a temporary measure deployed in specific circumstances, and required evidence to justify why a person should be paid more than the usual rate
- said that it would be useful for the Committee to see how many people were on each pay grade at all levels, and what the average salary was, as the present report covered only a small fraction of the total staff. Such a report would also assist the monitoring of the gender pay gap.

The Chairman asked officers to prepare a workforce review paper, to include the above information, perhaps accompanied by information on such aspects as performance and sickness – in short, a workforce review paper. He invited members to send to the HR Director any further comments on what such a paper might include.

Action required

It was resolved unanimously

to recommend that Council agree the Pay Policy Statement 2018-19 (Appendix 1 of the report before Committee) including the pay multiple and the Gender Pay Gap Report 2018 (Appendix 3).

25. UPDATE ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS

The Committee received a report updating it on the national Local Government pay offer, which proposed 2% uplifts on 1 April 2018 and 1 April 2019 for the majority of employees on National Joint Council (NJC) rates. Members noted that the offer had not yet been agreed, and was being put to the ballot by the trades unions, so it was still not clear what the final implications for the 2018/19 budget would be. The offer, if accepted, would have to be funded from within the Council's existing resources; the business plan presented to Council in February had assumed a 2% increase across the board for employees linked to national terms. Members noted that the pay inflation of some employees was locally determined, which the Strategic Management Team was in the process of reviewing against the budget.

The Chairman requested that a further report be brought to the Committee because of the uncertainties of the present position.

It was resolved to note national and local pay negotiation update.

26. NEW EMPLOYMENT POLICY UPDATE

The Committee received a report updating it on key employment policy reviews and developments planned for 2018. Members noted that the Grievance Procedure and the Bullying and Harassment Policy had been reviewed in the light of staff feedback that their processes were cumbersome to implement; the former policy was now known as Resolving Workplace Concerns, and the latter was now Respect in the Workplace.

The Committee further noted that Resolving Workplace Concerns encouraged the speedy resolution of issues as they were raised, and contained fewer stages in its process than the Grievance Procedure. Resolving Workplace Concerns was currently being launched, with training for managers across the organisation.

Discussing the report and Resolving Workplace Concerns policy revisions, members

- enquired what had changed apart from the language and ethos of the former Grievance Policy. Officers advised that a step had been removed, that of talking to the line manager, because this intermediate step had in practice been used to prolong the matter, rather than resolve it. Under Resolving Workplace Concerns, managers were expected to resolve issues, and there was an appeal procedure should the employee not be satisfied by the result
- drew attention to the list of circumstances to which the Resolving Workplace Concerns procedure did not apply. Officers explained that there were already ways of raising an issue within the excluded areas; Resolving Workplace Concerns could be used for issues about colleagues, team meetings, working hours for example
- commented that the exclusion of 'day to day management issues' was open to interpretation, and could make staff reluctant to raise concerns. The HR Director undertook to review the wording of this and the following point, on disagreements with Council policy **Action required**
- suggested that it would be helpful to incorporate a list of inclusions to indicate the sort of issues that people might wish to raise, and to remove the exclusion of day to day management issues
- asked that where other policies were mentioned, a link to them be supplied.

Turning to the Respect at Work Policy, members

- welcomed the inclusion of the table of positive behaviours, and the definition of unacceptable behaviours, as helping people to identify where it would be appropriate to challenge a particular behaviour
- suggested that use of the policy should be kept under review, and if staff were not in practice making use of it, further revision should be considered.

Members endorsed both documents, Resolving Workplace Concerns and the Respect at Work Policy.

It was resolved

to note the update on key employment policy reviews and developments planned for 2018.

Chairman
8th May 2018