

Staffing and Appeals Committee Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 22 February 2022

Time: 10.05a.m. – 11.37a.m.

Venue: [New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4YE](#)

Present: Councillors D Dew, L Dupré (substituting for H Batchelor), E Murphy (Chair), L Nethsingha, K Reynolds, and N Shailer

21. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors H Batchelor, K Billington and T Sanderson. No declarations of interest were received.

22. Minutes – 7th December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2021 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

23. Senior Manager Pay Data and Pay Policy Statement 2022-23

The Committee received a report reviewing the data due to be published on senior employee remuneration to ensure compliance with The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Localism Act 2011.

Attention was drawn to the four posts that exceeded the £150,000 salary range. It was noted that these posts were only partly funded by the County Council; three of them were shared with Peterborough City Council and one post was hosted on the behalf of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Although two of the officers had now left the County Council, the reporting period was for January to December 2021. Members also noted the posts within Tier 1 to 3. There had been a significant increase in the number of employees with a basic salary of less than £50k that had total earnings of over the £50k threshold, which was due to additional elements of pay received such as for overtime.

The Committee was informed that the median salary in 2021 was the same as 2020, and the mean salary had increased slightly compared to the previous year. In conclusion, Members noted that the Council's current salary ratio was 1 to 6.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- highlighted the fact that the four employees exceeding the £150,000 salary range were named but those in Tier 1 to 3 just had their job titles even though the officers could still be identified by structure charts.
- queried whether there was a definition for “consistent, transparent and equitable” as identified in the introduction of the Chief Officer Pay Policy Statement. It was

acknowledged that these terms used widely in employment policies could be made clearer. **Action Required.**

- queried the purpose of monitoring the ratio between the remuneration of the Council's Chief Officers and Deputies and the rest of the workforce given the lack of targets and strategies in this area. It was noted that monitoring was used to identify the reasons for any changes and, if appropriate, to then act. It was suggested that a comparison against other councils should be included in future reports. The Chair welcomed this proposal if practicable, as it would provide a sense check of the policies implemented elsewhere such as in relation to pay increases and job definitions, and also to consider what the output of the monitoring process could be so that changes observed could be translated into actions or recommendations. It was also important to have some key metrics to identify the changes over a five-year period. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

consider the report and recommend the Pay Policy Statement 2022-2023 (Appendix 2) to Council on 15 March 2022 for approval.

24. Pay Gap Reporting

The Committee received a report reviewing the data due to be published on the Gender Pay Gap to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Members were reminded that data used for the calculations was as at 31 March 2021. The reporting of the Ethnicity Pay Gap was not a statutory requirement, however the Council reported on it voluntarily following a Council motion. Attention was drawn to Section 2 of the report which showed a 2.3% increase in the mean gender pay gap to 9.6% and a 0.3% decrease in the median pay gap to 8.6%. The national gender pay gap had increased from 14.9% in 2020 to 15.4% in 2021. Members were advised of the gender split by quartile which showed more females in the lower and lower middle quartiles compared to the upper middle and upper quartiles. The split by employee type showed significantly more females in the employee and professional and management types compared to the Director/Senior Management one. Attention was drawn to the factors which contributed to the gender pay gap.

The mean Ethnicity Pay Gap was noted at 2.5% and the median was noted at -2.9% value, which had remained unchanged from 2020. It was also noted that work was being carried out to increase the available data to work with in order to give a more accurate picture for future reports. In conclusion, Members were advised of progress against actions in the action plan to date relating to both pay gaps and future actions, which was managed by the Council's People Strategy Board.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- highlighted the need to have a better balance in the employee type by persuading more males to take lower paid roles. The Workforce Strategy and Policy Manager

agreed to add the need to bring more men into the lower job types to the action plan. Action Required.

- highlighted the fact that organisations used different classifications in relation to the ethnicity pay gap. It was therefore queried what classification the Council used and why it had been chosen. It was noted that the Council's classification was based on the same format as the gender pay gap used by other authorities with the use of white and non-white. Whilst it might not currently be ideal, it was likely that when mandatory reporting on the ethnicity pay gap was introduced it would include reporting categories. In the meantime, action being taken by the Council to improve data in this area would enable it to categorise in more detail.
- suggested that senior management were either being paid too much or those at the bottom grades were being paid too little. There was a need to consider this in the issue of the wider societal context as the Council was not functioning in a vacuum. The lower grades were largely part-time, so it was important that the appraisal process enabled these members of staff to receive a pay rise. The Assistant Director: HR acknowledged that many of these roles were in services such as social care or the library service which typically attracted more females. Work would be undertaken to consider how the Council could attract more males into these roles and make use of options such as apprenticeships or the Kickstart scheme.
- expressed concern about binary presentations as there was a considerable amount of depth behind both the gender and ethnicity pay gaps. It was suggested that the 2% swing either way in the latter was not a significant imbalance but it could be if the categories were broken down beyond non-white.
- suggested that the nature of the organisation had a direct impact on the gender pay gap with males opting for more manual type work and females more care type work. The Council had outsourced a considerable number of manual jobs particularly in highways, which had a predominantly male workforce. The Workforce Strategy and Policy Manager acknowledged the points raised in relation to the make up of the Council's workforce with regard to the gender pay gap and drew attention to the comparison with other authorities in Appendix 2. Hertfordshire County Council had a 3.5% pay gap last year and a 0.4% one this year, which was due to the fact the Fire Service with lower paid retained roles and a predominantly male workforce was part of its organisation.
- highlighted experience of working in an organisation, which had ended the pay gap. There was a need for the Council to act in relation to its own policies with regard to negotiating pay when joining the organisation and performance ratings for part-timers, which suggested an unconscious bias in the process. It was therefore important to consider what could really make a step change.

It was resolved unanimously to:

consider the report and recommend the Pay Gap Report 2021 (Appendix 1) to Council on 15 March 2022 for approval.

25. Cambridgeshire County Council People Strategy

The Committee considered an update on progress with the People Strategy action plan covering the last twelve months and the process being followed to develop the new People Strategy, which had been delayed as a result of the pandemic. Members noted the impact on the Council's workforce of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last two years. As a result the action plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report had been revisited to reflect these learnings and challenges. The action plan included a summary of progress under the following themes: resourcing; employee engagement; wellbeing; skills development and behaviours; and reward and recognition, with a detailed update on each theme reflected in Section 3 of the report. Attention was also drawn to an overview of the current workforce profile at Appendix 2 to the report. It was noted that the development of the new People Strategy was a priority for this year and would be presented to Council following considered by the Staffing and Appeals Committee.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- queried whether the Council had a duty of care for staff working at home. In confirming the Council's responsibilities, the Assistant Director: HR reported that consideration had been given to staff potentially being more vulnerable by virtue of having to work at home early in the pandemic. There had been a review of the Council policies with HR officers working in collaboration with the Council's Domestic Violence Team. Managers had been provided with guidance on how to support such staff. It was noted that for some vulnerable members of staff access to a workplace had been provided during the pandemic. Others had been provided with time off work to exit a difficult situation. The policy therefore tried to create support for staff who needed it signing posting them to specialist professional services if the Council did not have necessary skills to support them.
- highlighted anecdotal evidence from a member of staff that the Council had become a more hierarchical organisation since the pandemic and the move to New Shire Hall with only senior officers having direct contact with Members. It was suggested that the Council needed to consider differently how Members engaged with its staff. The Assistant Director: HR acknowledged the points raised and would speak to the Chief Executive. **Action Required.**
- acknowledged that more had been asked of managers during the pandemic so it was queried whether support was available for them. It was noted that the Council was supporting managers directly as demonstrated by the provision of mental health awareness training for all managers.
- queried the possibility of splitting assessment from pay increases. The Workforce Strategy and Policy Manager reported that before the pandemic there had been a number of focus groups considering the Council's appraisal process before the change to the system. Many employees had indicated that they felt the appraisal process was designed to just get a pay rise, which meant that relevant information regarding what staff had done during a year, successes and development was being neglected. The new arrangements separated out pay from the appraisal side of the process as much as possible but it was very difficult when the Council had a

performance related pay framework. The ratings conversation regarding pay was therefore an annual one away from the appraisal process. It should be considered what options there were to try to introduce gender pay gap mitigations into the pay increase process. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to note the information contained in the report.

26. Cost of Living Increases 2021-22

The Committee considered an update on the national cost of living negotiations. The cost of living uplift for across the Professional and Management (P&M) and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) grades was determined locally unlike the other grades which were subject to national negotiations. The Council's Joint Management Team (JMT) had recommended a 1.75% uplift for P&M scales and was seeking the Committee's endorsement. The Committee was also being asked to approve an option of a 1%, 1.5% or 1.75% uplift for CLT grades. It was noted that an uplift of 1.75% had been reserved in the budget for 2022/23. Members were informed that if the national pay negotiations changed then the Committee would receive another report.

Individual Members raised the following issues in relation to the report:

- queried what would happen if the Committee failed to endorse the decision of JMT for a 1.75% uplift for P&M scales. It was noted that whilst it was constitutionally the Chief Executive's decision to set the pay for P&M scales, the Committee had always been consulted. Members were informed that if they disagreed with the recommendation, they could ask the Chief Executive to review the decision. It was important that the Committee received all the information relating to uplifts for other scales in order to inform its decision in relation to the Corporate and Leadership pay scale.
- queried whether the Committee should try to address the pay ratio when considering the cost-of-living increase to the Corporate and Leadership scale.
- highlighted the importance under the current circumstances to have an uplift of 1.75% across all pay scales particularly given the significant increase in the cost of living. Recruiting and retaining staff was not easy across the whole organisation. It was acknowledged that there was also a need to have a more in depth discussion about ways to tackle issues such as the gender pay gap. It was therefore suggested that a workshop should be held to review the Council's goals and how it could achieve them. The Assistant Director: HR highlighted the need for the Council to consider its pay strategy with a very clear pay and reward strategy as part of its People Strategy in order to address some of the differentials. The Chair agreed that a workshop should be arranged at an appropriate time. **Action Required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) endorse the provisional 1.75% uplift to the Professional and Management pay grades.

- b) agree the cost-of-living increase to the Corporate and Leadership pay scale at 1.75% in line with the above should national NJC negotiations conclude at 1.75%.

Chair