

## EMPLOYMENT PANEL

MONDAY, 14 MAY 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Lisa Targowska (Chairman), Dr Lilly Evans, Paul Brimacombe, Christine Bateson and David Hilton

Officers: Alison Alexander, Karen Shepherd and Nikki Craig

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bicknell, Carroll, Quick and Saunders.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Nikki Craig, Alison Alexander and Karen Shepherd declared interests in the item Pay Reward Outcome 2017/18 as officers of the council.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2018 be approved.**

### GENDER PAY GAP - COMPARISON

Members considered comparative gender gap data including the mean and median pay gap. It was noted that the borough ranked mid-table (161 of 320) in comparison to other local authorities, as detailed in Appendix A. In relation to the other Berkshire local authorities, only Reading was ranked higher. The borough ranked fourth in comparison to its 15 statistical neighbours.

Alison Alexander joined the meeting at 6.37pm.

A detailed analysis of ten local authorities had been undertaken but it had proved difficult to identify clear reasons for place rankings. The borough's action plan would stand the borough in good stead to move up the rankings. The Senior Management Team was now equally balanced in terms of gender.

It was confirmed that the council undertook job evaluation for all roles, both new roles and those changed in breadth or depth. The Action Plan included sample testing of job roles to ensure they were correctly evaluated. Councillor Hilton commented that if the council had undertaken proper evaluation and had looked at comparators, it could be satisfied with the current situation.

It was noted that family friendly policies were those that supported flexible working. Members suggested it would be useful to assess staff returning to work after taking maternity leave to determine what factors influenced their return, for example whether part time or full time. The Chairman commented that the more flexibility that could be offered, including condensed hours and working from home, the more likely the council could retain talented staff.

Councillor Brimacombe highlighted four key issues:

- Remuneration for work of equal value
- The opportunity for advancement being gender blind
- The removal of barriers
- The same treatment within posts, for example expectations also being gender blind

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Employment Panel notes the report.**

#### REDUNDANCY PAY COMPARISON

Members considered comparative data on redundancy payments. It was noted that prior to 2008 the council entitlement for redundancy pay included additional week's pay for continuous service. The current policy was actual weekly pay multiplied by the statutory number of weeks, based on age and continuous length of government service. The statutory minimum week's pay was £508. Based on a full time role this equated to a salary of £26,489. In the borough, 27% of staff earned above this level.

Members noted comparative figures for statutory redundancy pay and Royal Borough redundancy pay for differing ages and salary levels. It was noted that from the age of 55 an employee was able to access their pension with no actuarial reduction therefore the council had to pay the difference, this was known as pension strain. The government had proposed a cap of £95,000 for redundancy payments including pension strain and pay in lieu of notice. The council's policy would need to be reviewed when the cap was brought in.

It was noted that although comparative data was available from other public sector organisations, it was not forthcoming from the private sector. Councillor Hilton commented that in the private sector deals were agreed when an individual was made redundant and no company would be prepared to reveal details therefore there was no benchmark the council could use to compare.

Councillor Brimacombe commented that when a role was made redundant this caused disruption to a person's career; the higher their salary the more significant the disruption as there were less jobs available in the pyramid. Therefore the principle of higher redundancy payments for a higher paid job was justified. It was too simplistic to just offer statutory pay if the borough wanted to be an organisation that attracted talent.

Councillor Hilton highlighted that in comparison to other local authorities, as detailed in Appendix B, only one authority paid less than the borough and a number paid more in term so redundancy payments. The NHS was far more generous than local government. It was noted that borough staff who had moved to Achieving for Children and Optalis were TUPE transferred on the same terms and conditions. If they moved to a new role within either organisation they would move to new terms and conditions.

Councillor Brimacombe confirmed that he was happy with the current policy. Councillor Hilton agreed that it was not unreasonable to stay with the current policy; the borough was in line with the majority of local authorities. In any event the borough would have to review its policy when the proposed cap of £95,000 came in. Councillor Dr L Evans highlighted that the borough was in line with its neighbouring councils.

Both Kingston and Richmond, with whom the borough had partnered for AfC, offered more generous terms.

Members thanked officers for the information presented in the report.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Employment Panel notes the report.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on items 7-8 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 7.42 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....