

## EMPLOYMENT AND MEMBER STANDARDS PANEL

TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Lisa Targowska (Chairman), Eileen Quick (Vice-Chairman), Stuart Carroll, MJ Saunders, Paul Brimacombe and Christine Bateson

Officers: Karen Shepherd, Nikki Craig and Russell O'Keefe

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bicknell.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Russell O'Keefe declared an interest in the item 'Part II minutes' and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business, as detailed in the agenda, be varied.**

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2018 be approved.**

### APPROVAL OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20

Members considered approval of an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20, as required by the Localism Act 2011.

The Head of HR explained that the council was required to annually update and publish the policy, which included details of chief officer salaries, benefits, redundancy and pension entitlements, the number of employees in pay bands and a comparison between the highest and lowest paid officer. Members noted that table 1 provided data on this comparison since it had been recorded, showing a reduction over time. There had been a slight increase in the latest data due to the appointment of the new Managing Director.

Members noted that the policy would need to be revised in-year when the public sector exit payment reforms came into force. The reforms had been due in spring 2018 but had been delayed. Members received comparative data for other Berkshire authorities and councils within the CIPFA group, showing the borough was doing well. It would not be possible to rank the borough nationally without seeking and comparing data from every authority, which would require significant resources.

The Acting Managing Director confirmed that the ability to buy or sell leave was at manager discretion and based on business need. He had personally never received a request to buy leave within his service areas. It was confirmed that a new starter received 28 days holiday plus 8 bank holidays, accruing from day one. Councillor

Brimacombe commented that most private companies capped leave at 25 days plus bank holidays. The Chairman commented that the civil service standard was 32 days plus bank holidays. The Head of HR confirmed that other local authorities on the Green Book gave 28 days, plus more for additional years' service. The borough was therefore relatively low compared to other local authorities.

It was confirmed that apprentices were not included in the data relating to highest and lowest paid officers as this would distort the data. Members noted that all officers received the benefits listed in paragraph 3.2 of the policy.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Employment and Member Standards Panel notes the report and:**

- i) Approves the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 and recommends the statement to Council for approval on 26 February 2019.**
- ii) Notes that further revisions will be required to the statement when the Government's reforms to public sector exit pay arrangements are implemented.**

GENDER PAY GAP 2018

Members considered gender pay gap data for the period up to 31 March 2018, which was required to be published by 31 March 2019. During the 2017/18 financial year a number of services had transferred out to partner organisations, therefore the workforce data at 31 March 2017 was very different to that at 31 March 2018, on which the latest report was based. In particular the ratio between male and female staff had reduced, from 74% to 65% female.

Members noted the detail of table 1 in the report which showed a gender gap of 7.58% (mean) for the borough. This compared to a figure of 17.1% nationally and 17.5% for the public sector. The borough performed well against other Berkshire councils, although 2018 figures had yet to be published. Updated data could be brought back to the Panel later in the year.

The regulations also required comparative data relating to bonuses. For 2018 this had included honoraria, instant rewards, and lump sum payments in Pay Reward and Award. Lump sums were awarded if an individual was already at the top of their pay band, therefore it was difficult to do a year-on-year comparison. However, Members noted that in relation to bonuses, females had higher average (mean) payments. Appendix C provided commentary on the data, which not all councils chose to produce. The commentary included activities the council could undertake to address the pay gap. These would not necessarily have an impact in year one, to see significant change may take a number of years.

The first action was to review pay profiles within pay grades and dip sample to identify any pay equalities. Of the councils 13 grades, in eight grades females were paid slightly more than their male counterparts. In the five grades where males were paid more, males were in most cases older and had a greater length of service.

The second action, to undertake unconscious bias training, had resulted in the launch of an e-learning course. CLT would be considering whether the course should be mandatory for all managers. The promotion of family friendly policies had been undertaken through Borough Bulletin. A survey was being considered to see if staff

recognised the options available. There had been no take-up of shared parental leave however this may be because it was only paid at statutory rates. A middle managers' forum had been proposed to utilise the skill set and talent below CLT. A mentoring programme was in place and there had been a push on the qualifications available through apprenticeship levy funding.

Councillor Brimacombe commented that as long as roles were gender blind and opportunities were available to all there was a point at which the council could do no more to manipulate the workforce. The council should not chase a figure beyond what was acceptable on the basis that there was no bias in the system. The Acting Managing Director commented that of the 12 most senior officers, 6 were male and 6 were female. Four months previously this would have been seven females to six males.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Employment and Member Standards Panel notes the report and:**

- i) Approves the commentary about the council's gender pay gap for publication on the council's website and the Gov.uk website.**
- ii) Approves the actions identified in the commentary.**

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 7-9 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 7.35 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....