

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM - 15 MARCH 2018

### Present:

Councillors Brock (in place of Councillor Page), Lovelock and Steele	
A McNamara (Chair)	National Education Union (NEU)
Ms B Reynolds	UNISON
Mr K Magee	Unite
Mr W King	Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager
Mr R Morris	HR Partner
Mr M Popham	Committee Services
Ms S Smith	Head of HR (from 16 April 2018)

**Apologies:** Councillors David Absolom and Page

### 1. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2017

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 9 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 2. PAY POLICY 2018/19

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report on the development of the Pay Policy 2018/19, in preparation for its submission to full Council on 27 March 2018. A copy of the Pay Policy Statement 2018/19 was appended to the report. The report stated that Local Authorities were required under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to prepare a Pay Policy Statement that articulated the Council's policy towards the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

The report explained that each local authority was an individual employer in its own right and had the autonomy to make decisions on pay that were appropriate to local circumstances and which delivered value for money for local taxpayers. Section 40 of the Act required authorities, in developing their Pay Policy Statement, to have regard to any guidance that had been published by the Secretary of State. This included Communities and Local Government guidance on Openness and Accountability in Local Pay and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency (as amended). The Act required Councils to produce a Pay Policy Statement annually that was accessible for council tax payers to be able to take an informed view of whether local decisions on all aspects of remuneration were fair.

**AGREED -** That, subject to Personnel Committee's consideration of the report at its meeting on 15 March 2018, the draft Pay Policy 2018/19 would be recommended to Council on 27 March 2018 for approval, be noted.

### 3. BUYING ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report on the updated policy on buying annual leave, which would aim to promote the policy and make it easier to apply and take up. The revised policy on buying additional annual leave was appended to the report for approval.

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The significant changes to the existing policy were:

- That staff could buy additional leave after 6 months continuous service with the Council rather than having to wait for 12 months;
- Staff would be able to apply for additional leave at any time of the year, rather than at set times; and
- Staff would be able to make a one off purchase for a particular amount of days, or make a permanent commitment to buying additional leave days every year, the scheme would no longer be limited to a permanent arrangement to purchase extra days leave each year.

**AGREED - That the revised Buying Annual Leave Policy, as appended to the report, be endorsed for submission to Personnel Committee on 15 March 2018 for approval and to then to be made available to staff on IRIS or on request from their manager.**

### 4. GENDER PAY GAP

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report on the Council's requirement in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 as an employer with 250 or more employees to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations every year on 31 March. The calculations must be published on the Council's website as well as a government website. The report set out the figures that would need to be published with an analysis of the information by 30 March 2018, which showed that the Council's mean (2.21%) and median (3.83%) gender pay gap compared favourably with the national average of 18.1%. The full details of the information to be published were set out in the report for consideration.

**AGREED - That the gender pay gap calculations be noted and the action set out in Section 5 of the report be endorsed for submission to Personnel Committee on 15 March 2018.**

### 5. EQUALITY AUDIT 2016/17

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report that set out a statistical summary of the equal opportunities monitoring under the Council's Equality Monitoring Framework for the financial year 2016/17. The data tables were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the audit was a component of the Council's Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy and would be presented annually, in the form set out in the Equality Monitoring Framework, to provide background data that would assist and inform the work of the Committee as well as providing an equalities context and focus for ongoing discussions with internal and external stakeholders.

The report stated that the framework contained key employment profiles which the Council had to measure by law and also included other profile data based on previous national performance indicators (PIs) outturns where relevant. In addition, data from the report would assist each directorate in setting its own targets based on their clients, customers or service users.

The report explained that the agreed framework reporting heads were:

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- All Council Staff by directorate, gender, ethnic origin and disability;
- All Council Staff by gender, ethnic origin and disability across salary bands;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled job applicants;
- Female, BME and disabled applicants as a proportion of their relative cohorts, who progressed to shortlisting to appointment compared with male, white and non-disabled applicants;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees accessing Council training by directorate, training type, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Proportion of female, BME and disabled employees involved in Council procedures, compared to male, white and non-disabled employees;
- Staff turnover data analysed by gender and ethnicity;
- The 'protected characteristics' of Council Staff, as defined by the 2010 Equality Act.

The statistical summary for each of these areas was detailed in Appendix 1 and the report highlighted the following points:

- The proportion of women employed by the Council had remained almost static at 78.4%, with 92.4% in schools but only 46.2% in the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services (DENS);
- The proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff had increased from 15.3% in 2015/16 (the figure of 21.7% reported to Personnel Committee on 8 December 2016 (Minute 21 refers) had been recorded incorrectly) to 16.1%, which compared with a 23% BME economically active population within the Borough;
- The proportion of employees who had declared a disability had increased from 2.9% to 3.2% but this was in comparison to a 6% economically active population within the Borough;
- In 2016/17 there had been 4002 applications for 352 appointments, compared with 4716 applications for 426 appointments in 2015/16. Of the applications in 2016/17, 64.6% were from women, 39.7% from BME applicants and 5.3% from people with a declared disability.

The tables also showed comparisons of gender, ethnicity and disability across salary bands and this indicated that there were around 59-73% female employees in all salary bands except for band 1 and those bands 10 and above. The overall number of employees who had declared a disability was relatively even across most of the bands with the exception of band 9 and above. The level of BME employees in the higher earnings bands had increased from 5% to 14% but still remained relatively low in the more senior roles.

**AGREED - That the report be noted.**

### **6. MATTERS RAISED BY THE UNIONS**

#### **(a) Christmas Closure**

B Reynolds, UNISON, raised the issue regarding the closure of Council Offices over the Christmas period. The Forum noted that Zoe Hanim was leading on this proposal and there would be a meeting of the Terms & Conditions Working Group on 26 March

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2018, which would hopefully provide more clarity on the timetable and offer to staff.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

### (b) Management of some staff consultations

B Reynolds, UNISON, reported that some staff consultations had been based on draft Job Descriptions, which had not indicated the pay grade of the post. The Forum noted that the consultation needed to take account of comments received during the exercise to inform the final JD but requested further information on the absence of salary grades from the documents as this would be a relevant factor to the consultees.

**AGREED:** That W King report back on the absence of information on the pay grades in some staff consultations on new Job Descriptions.

### (c) Manager awareness of Employee Stability Agreement

**AGREED:** B Reynolds to advise W King of specific instances where managers had seemingly not been aware of the Employee Stability Agreement.

### (d) Confirmation of the role of LJF and Personnel Committee in any changes to local policies, procedures and agreements

The Forum noted that the recognised process was for local HR policies, procedures and agreements to be presented to the Local Joint Forum, prior to them being submitted to Personnel Committee for formal approval.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

### (e) Attendance of Senior Officers at DJF (particularly DENS)

B Reynolds, UNISON, reported that Directors were now attending DJF meetings regularly, but there was sometimes a lack of attendance by other senior managers in the organisation.

**AGREED:** That senior managers be encouraged to attend DJF meetings.

### (f) Monitoring/reporting of equal opportunities data in staff recruitment, retention and promotion

The Forum noted the report the Equalities Audit report (Minute 5 above refers), which would be submitted to Personnel Committee for further consideration.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

### (g) Volunteer Policy

B Reynolds, UNISON, queried whether the latest version of the Volunteer Policy was always being used by managers.

**AGREED:** That any instances of the incorrect Volunteer Policy being used be

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reported to W King.

### 7. OTHER BUSINESS

The members noted that this would be Warren King's last meeting of the Forum before leaving the Council to take up a new position as the Head of HR at Alexander Devine Children's Hospice in Maidenhead. Warren was thanked for all his work during the previous four and a half years with Reading as the Interim HR/ Payroll Services Manager and he was wished every success in his new appointment.

(The meeting opened at 5.00pm and closed at 5.46pm).