

Minutes of the meeting of Employment panel held at Online meeting only on Wednesday 18 November 2020 at 3.30 pm

Present: Councillor David Hitchiner (chairperson)
Councillor Ellie Chowns (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Liz Harvey and Terry James

Officers: Assistant director, people

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tony Johnson.

9. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no named substitutes.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public

13. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

14. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The assistant director, people, introduced the report and

- It is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 that the council publishes a statement which sets out its approach to pay.
- It is important to note that this policy does not in itself change how we do things. It is a statement of what is already in place.
- The role of employment panel is to recommend the policy to full council at its meeting in February 2021 and afterwards the statement will be published on the council's website.
- There are no significant changes in the policy since it was brought last year.
- Based on the feedback received last year the ratio between the highest and lowest paid and how that compares with other local authorities in the region or nearby have continued to be reported to the panel. It was noted that the council's ratio is the one of the lowest.

- More information about the market forces supplements which are in place including the review dates has been included.

It was encouraging to see that the pay ratios were lower than in most councils. It was explained that there were two potential ways in order to reduce the ratio further which were:

1. Decreasing the chief executive's salary; or
2. Eliminating the grades at the bottom of the pay scale.

It was noted that as the pay increases were nationally agreed, then the ratio between the lowest paid and the chief executive's pay would remain consistent. It was further noted that approximately two years ago the National Joint Council (NJC) had introduced new pay scales which had reduced the gap so recent work had been undertaken nationally to reduce the gap.

The issue of market forces supplements (MFS) was discussed and it was noted that MFS were attached to posts and not the people in the posts. MFS were only used if they were warranted or had been benchmarked against other posts. The majority of the MFS were in the children's social work area and there may be some in place for senior manager posts as they were subject to the most nuanced recruitment processes. It was the aim of the council to keep MFS in force at their lowest possible number.

It was noted that details of the gender pay gap were not included within the report. It was explained that there were two different processes in place and the gender pay gap information would be reported in January 2021. The employment panel requested that details of the gender pay gap be included within the pay policy statement in future.

Following a query from a panel member, it was confirmed that there were good provisions and policies in place for those staff who wished to request flexi working arrangements. The employment panel requested that at a future meeting, a workforce report be presented.

RESOLVED that

the pay policy statement at appendix A is recommended to full council

15. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act (as amended) as indicated below. The item discloses information in relation to an individual.

The assistant director, people, introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- The council's current Director of Public Health (DPH) would be leaving their post by the end of 2020.
- This panel would be asked to consider options for a replacement in the New Year and at the same time take the opportunity to review what needs of the council in relation to the role, particularly as there had been lessons learnt during the pandemic about how the role should operate within the council.

- The DPH was a statutory role and the council were required to appoint someone to carry out that function
- The purpose of the report was to agree the interim arrangements.
- It was being proposed that as there was a suitably qualified internal candidate immediately available to act up into the DPH role, that they be appointed on an interim basis. This would enable the council to commence the search for a permanent DPH.
- Even though this was an interim arrangement, the process for appointing a DPH is not straightforward as Public Health England (PHE) and the Faculty of Public Health needed assurance of any candidate's technical competence and that was achieved through an advisory appointments committee (AAC). This process was being undertaken at the same time as the panel was meeting. Therefore any decision made by employment panel to appoint the individual on an interim basis would be subject to the AAC assessing them as competent.

It was confirmed that there were no other qualified internal candidates within the Council. The individual's CV was briefly discussed. It was noted that should the individual chose to leave during the interim appointment period, then they would be required to give three months' notice. The council would then need to look at either sharing a DPH with another council or appointing an external interim.

The assistant director, people, confirmed that the acting director would be well supported and a mentor would be identified.

It was noted that public health was an important area for the council and there was a need to ensure that there was a good working relationship with health organisations.

As part of the permanent DPH recruitment process, a benchmarking exercise against councils of a similar size would be undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

Subject to approval from the Advisory Appointments Committee and subject to there being no valid objections received from cabinet members by 9am on Friday 20 November, the individual identified in the report is temporarily appointed for up to 12 months to the role of Director of Public Health.

The meeting ended at 16:23

Chairperson