

Minutes of the meeting of the Employment Panel held in Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 15 January 2024 at 10.00 am

Committee members present in person and voting: Councillors: Jonathan Lester (Chairperson), Liz Harvey, Bob Matthews and Pete Stoddart

Committee members participating via remote attendance: Councillors: Ellie Chowns (Vice-Chairperson)

[Note: Committee members participating via remote attendance, i.e. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.]

Others in attendance: T Sampson (Director of HR and OD), J Higgins (Democratic Services Assistant), J Preece (Democratic Services Officer) and L Edwards (HR Improvement Manager)

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received, although Cllr Chowns informed the Chair she may need to leave the meeting early.

23. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no substitutes.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairperson.

26. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

27. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No questions had been received from councillors.

28. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Members of the panel considered a report by the HR Improvement manager seeking recommendation of the pay policy statement 2024-2025 to Full Council on 9th February 2024. In presenting the report the HR Improvement manager highlighted that the statement was an annual requirement and that it was usually a statement of policies already in place.

The HR Improvement manager explained there was one change to the content of the policy this year which was the introduction of 12.5 which makes reference to government guidance on public sector exit payments. There are areas that have been updated in line to account of a true picture of the organisation at the time of writing (November 2023) and the following areas had been updated:

- Section 5, the salary ratio has been updated, this has reduced from the previous year and this is because the chief executive's pay award was proportionately lower than the pay award for all other staff.
- Section 6, the Gender Pay Gap information, linked to the most recent analysis
- Appendix 1 – Pay Structure
- Appendix 2 – Staff distribution across the grades (as at October 2023)

In response to questions raised by the panel it was noted:

1. All roles vacant and interim are to be included in section 3.2 of Appendix 1 Pay Policy Statement 2024-25.
2. Improved wording to be applied to section 4.2 in terms of the "real living wage".
3. With regards to the ratios between the council's lowest paid staff and the chief executive's salary having decreased, it was confirmed that this was due to the latest pay awards which are determined nationally.
4. The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development confirmed a gender pay action plan was now in place. As this did not fall under the remit of the Employment Panel it was suggested that the Scrutiny Management Board were best placed to add this to their work programme.
5. The Leader confirmed his support for maintaining the "real living wage".
6. The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development confirmed the number of interim posts had fallen considerably in the last 12 months and a comparison would be circulated to the committee.
7. In reference to the gender pay gap, it was confirmed that the chart that displays "staff distribution across grades" would be altered to differentiate between men and woman.
8. An explanation of what the gender pay gap is to be included in Appendix 1 Pay Policy Statement 2024-25.

It was unanimously resolved that: the pay policy statement at Appendix A is recommended to Full Council.

Action: The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development to circulate a comparison of the number of current interim posts compared to the previous 12 months.

The meeting ended at 10.16 am

Chairperson