

Minutes of the meeting of Employment Panel held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 16 January 2025 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor Jonathan Lester (chairperson)
Councillor Diana Toynbee (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Liz Harvey, Pete Stoddart and Ben Proctor

Officers: Director of HR and OD, Democratic Services Officer and and HR Improvement Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Clare Davies and Councillor Terry James.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Councillor Ben Proctor was present as a substitute for Councillor Terry James.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions received from members of the public.

6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions received from Councillors.

7. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The HR Improvement Manager introduced the report and highlighted in accordance with the Localism Act, it was a statutory requirement for authorities to publish their pay policy statement annually. The purpose of the statement was to outline the council's approach to pay, providing a factual description of policies currently in place.

The role of employment panel is to recommend the pay policy to the full council budget meeting on 7th February 2025 after which it will be published on the council website. While there had been no amendments or insertions to the content of the policy this year compared to previous years, certain sections had been updated to reflect a true picture of the organisation at the time of writing (November 2024). The updates included:

- **Section 3:** Updated list of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers with their respective salary grades
- **Section 5:** Recalculated salary ratio, which remains unchanged from the previous year.
- **Section 6:** Updated Gender Pay Gap information based on the most recent analysis (2023 data)
- **Appendix 1:** Revised Pay Structure
- **Appendix 2:** Updated staff distribution across the grades as of September 2024

In response to committee questions, it was noted:

1. Comparative figures for the council's median earnings and the chief executive's salary would be included in the report to be approved by full council.
2. The Director of HR and OD (DHROD) explained that careful consideration is given before engaging a high-cost interim and where a need for an interim is identified, managers are expected to have written objectives and a clear set of deliverables that are expected of the Interim. Managers are expected to take early action if the council is not getting what is paid for, and managers should be reporting back to the agency at the first opportunity, not at the end of the assignment. Spending on high-cost interims is regularly monitored and all data compiled by Finance and reported on a regular basis to the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
3. Thought would be given to incorporating political oversight for interim appointments where appointments are not made by full council.
4. The DHROD highlighted the chart detailing the distribution of employees across the whole organisation against the council's pay structure and by gender.
5. It was confirmed that the gender pay gap action plan had been published on the councils website.
6. The pensions discretion policy was highlighted. The DHROD agreed to include a summary of the discretions used in the report to full council.
7. The HR Improvement Manager would investigate the format the salaries, fees and allowances data is published in to ensure best accessibility.
8. It was noted that the webpage should be labelled with the Open Government Licence (OGL).
9. It was confirmed that the reporting of diversity statistics which is required through the public sector equality duty is undertaken annually.

RESOLVED

That the pay policy statement at Appendix 1 was recommended to Full Council.

Action(s)

- 1) Comparative figures for the council's median earnings and the chief executive's salary along with clarification on the use of pension's discretion would be included in the report to be approved by full council.
- 2) Thought would be given to incorporating political oversight for interim appointments where appointments are not made by full council.
- 3) The format used for publishing the salaries, fees and allowances data would be investigated to ensure best accessibility.