

Minutes of: EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Date of Meeting: 3 February 2026

Present: Councillor R Gold (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, M Walsh, T Tariq, L Smith, I Rizvi and S Arif

Also in attendance: K Waterhouse, Executive Director, (Strategy & Transformation)
Catherine King, HR Business Manager

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J Grimshaw and Councillor C Cummins

EP.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are noted above.

EP.26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tariq declared a personal interest as Chair of North West Employers.

EP.27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed:

that the notes of the meeting held on 24 November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EP.28 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Gold referred to Minute EP.21 of the Minutes of the last meeting and the question that had been raised by Councillor Vernon in relation to the disciplinary and grievance procedure and how often they were used. Councillor Gold asked for this information to be provided to the Panel at a future meeting.

EP.29 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) presented a report setting out proposals for a number of new, changed, reviewed and replaced policies.

It was reported that Trade Union Colleagues had been fully engaged in the work.

1. Family Leave Policy

The Family Leave Policy was created in July 2023 and combined into one document provisions relating to maternity, paternity, fostering, adoption, shared parental leave, parental bereavement and IVF. It was amended in February 2025 to include neonatal care leave provisions.

Small changes have been made to the Family Leave Policy, in response to the Employment Rights Act 2025, to ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation with effect from April 2026. These include:

- Making paternity leave a day one right
- Removing the need to take paternity leave before taking any shared parental leave
- Making parental leave a day one right

2. Working Time Regulations Policy

The Working Time Regulations Policy sets out the Council's commitment to providing safe working conditions, and details how it will take all practical measures possible to operate within the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended). It was last reviewed in April 2009.

Changes have been made to generally update the Policy and also to strengthen Policy wording to ensure that staff, in normal circumstances, with more than 1 internal contract are not permitted to work above the 48-hour limit. This is in line with the Council's approach to supporting staff welfare and wellbeing.

3. Job Evaluation Procedure

The NJC Job Evaluation Procedure and supporting documents were last reviewed in 2015. This procedure is used to evaluate the jobs of the vast majority of Council employees, who are on NJC 'green book' terms and conditions.

Although there are no changes to the NJC scheme itself, the HR Team and Unison are now using a new Sharepoint based system to record, monitor and report upon evaluations. The Procedure has been amended to reflect this, and also the opportunity has been taken for a general update and to pull into one document the evaluation and appeals procedures.

The Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) thanked the HR Business Management Team and the Unions for their work on updating the relevant policies.

Members present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Rizvi referred to the Equality Act as being listed at S.2.2 of the Family Leave Policy but the Human Rights Act was not, and asked why this was.

It was explained this was an oversight and the Human Rights Act would be included as the policy was written in accordance with the Act.

- Councillor Walsh referred to S.6.13 of the Family Leave Policy referring to still birth deaths and asked where termination would come in as it wasn't part of the policy.

It was explained that although this wasn't part of the policy any employee in this situation would be supported as sensitively as possible.

- Councillor Tariq asked whether the Council benchmarked policies with other organisations and it was explained that this did happen.
- Councillor Walsh referred to the working times regulations policy and the 48 hour limit and asked if voluntary work would be included within this.

It was explained that this would not be included as voluntary work would be undertaken in an employees' own time and not within their contracts of employment.

It was agreed:

1. That the updated Family Leave Policy, the revised Working Time Regulations Policy and the revised Job evaluation Procedure be approved.
2. That the documents be forwarded onto the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee for endorsement.
3. That subject to the endorsement of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee, the documents be published on the Council's intranet pages and communicated to staff.

EP.30 PAY POLICY

The Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) presented the Pay policy statement.

The statement included the local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer; the local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest-paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition); the local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers; and the local authority's policy on other specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

Councillor Bernstein referred to the gender pay gap for 2025 representing the lowest recorded by the Council since reporting began and a decrease for the second year and stated that this was very positive to see.

It was agreed:

1. That the Employment Panel commend the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2026-27 for approval by full Council.
2. That the Employment Panel agree the Council's proposed pay structure for 2026-27 as set out within the statement and inclusive of revised non-consolidated pay supplements to retain compliance with the Real Living Wage rate of pay.

EP.31 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed:

1. To exclude the press and public.

EP.32 CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT

The Executive Director Strategy & Transformation presented a report setting out details relating to the recruitment of two posts within the Council.

It was agreed:

1. To note 100% of the AD DDAT role is Bury Council funded from April 2026
2. That the Employment Panel proposes that Council approve that a Market Supplement of £5k (total maximum remuneration of £101,251) be applied to the post of Assistant Director - People and Inclusion
3. That the proposed redesign of the People Service to present a more attractive management structure to the market be approved
4. To undertake a recruitment process for both posts

EP.33 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR R GOLD
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm)