

Minutes of: EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Date of Meeting: 1 March 2023

Present: Councillor T Rafiq (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, J Grimshaw, D Berry, E Moss,
M Walsh and L Dean

Also in attendance: Lynne Ridsdale - Chief Executive, Sam McVaigh – Director of People and Inclusion, Kelly Barnett – Democratic Services Officer

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C Cummins and Councillor T Tariq

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are noted above.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the notes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19 COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE REVIEW

Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive provided members with a verbal update around the Council Organisational Structure Review ahead of a report going to a future Cabinet Meeting.

Lynne Ridsdale reported that she is in the process of dealing with a restructure to address the vacant Deputy Chief Executive post and other gaps in the structure which include a role to lead the work around social policy and to ensure that the Council has the capacity to lead the agenda around culture, across the levelling up sites and the emerging community wellness offer. Lynne advised that as well as filling the gaps and bringing opportunities together within the organisational structure, there are savings to be made within the transformation programme.

Lynne Ridsdale reported that the balance of a Chief Executive with the six Executive Directors feels right for the Organisational Structure and intends to keep the structure as it is but to populate it fully from internal appointments, whilst saving money and providing development opportunity for some colleagues. Lynne reported that she is not intending to designate a Deputy Chief Executive as she was, as all Executive Directors will deputise for her in relation to their departments.

In response to the update, members welcomed the idea of not to appoint a designated Deputy Chief Executive and highlighted that there may be details to discuss ahead of the Cabinet Meeting within the report. Lynne Ridsdale advised that members will have the opportunity to ask further questions once the report is completed and will attend future Employment Panel meetings to update on staffing issues.

20 POLICY PAY STATEMENT 2023-24

Sam McVaigh, Director of People and Inclusion presented the Pay Policy Statement 2023-24.

Sam McVaigh reported that Local Authorities must set a pay policy statement annually. Pay policy statements set the Council's policy position, the remuneration and pay setting of Chief Officers. The pay policy statement 2023-24 is relatively unchanged from last year's statement. In setting pay policy statements, Councils are asked to consider the effectiveness of pay statement.

As agreed at the last Employment Panel meeting, the sign off of special severance payments is now linked into the pay policy statement 2023-24. The data around the gender pay gap continues to be positive, Bury is a better performing Local Authority regionally and nationally, although work around inclusion continues. Pay scales are included within the pay policy statement and include the 2022-23 national pay award. As the Council is an accredited real wage employers, the intention would be to supplement the bottom rate of pay to align to the real living wage from 1st April; these costs have been factored into the medium-term financial strategy. Once the pay award for 2023-24 is agreed and implemented the level of non-consolidated supplements will reduce so that, as a minimum, the overall level of hourly pay is retained.

In response to a member's question around gender pay, Sam McVaigh reported that in general the gender pay gap gives more credibility when discussing inclusion, a lot of work has been completed over the last 2-3 months around recruitment processes to make processes more streamline, the next phase of this work will be around the benefits of working in Bury and the gender pay gap will play a big part in this work. There is still work to be done but Sam McVaigh advised that he is proud of the positive work that has been completed.

The Employment Panel agreed:

1. to commend the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 for approval by full Council.
2. the Council's proposed pay structure for 23/24 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.

21 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW - PHASE 2

Sam McVaigh, Director of People and Inclusion presented the Workforce Policy Review – Phase 2.

Sam McVaigh reported that all of the policies have been developed in consultation with professionals leads and trade union representatives.

Reservists

Sam McVaigh explained that the policy doesn't substantively change our position around support to reservists in the workforce however it was suggested that the previous policy was unclear around leave allowance for reservists and needed strengthening. The policy will support the Council's aspiration to be a recognised gold level employer in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

Secondment Policy

Sam McVaigh presented the secondment policy and explained that our existing secondment policy had implications around substantive posts around long-term secondments. The revised policy maintains a commitment to a secondment for 12 months.

In response to a member's question around secondments, Sam McVaigh explained that the policy includes any secondments, both internally and externally. Sam McVaigh explained that there will be circumstances where there will be an option for a long-term secondments but this would be a large scale operational decision rather than an ad hoc decision.

Voluntary Exit Policy

There are currently 4 policies around voluntary exits, this policy brings all of the policies together in one document. Changes include a 3-year cap on flexible retirements and a strengthened policy provision to be clear that if an employee left under a voluntary package they will not be able to be re-engaged in normal circumstances without the agreement of the Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Affairs and Executive Director of People and Inclusion, the only exception will be for staff to undertake election work to ensure sufficient and capable staffing in this area.

The Employment Panel agreed:

1. the revised Reservists Policy
2. the revised Secondment Policy
3. the new Voluntary Exits Policy

Sam McVaigh explained that the agreed policies will go through to the Corporate JCC Committee for consideration and then be shared with employees.

22 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR T RAFIQ Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm)

