

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 4 JULY 2022 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.35 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chairman), Clive Jones (Vice-Chairman), Prue Bray, Stephen Conway and Stuart Munro

Officers Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Barbara Batchelor, Human Resources and Organisational Development

13. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Pauline Helliard Symons and Pauline Jorgensen.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2022 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary meetings held on 1 June and 15 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

16. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

17. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

18. ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023

The Board considered the Annual Pay Policy 2022/23.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- For the 2022/23 policy some amendments had been made in line with guidance issued from the Department for Communities and Local Government. To allow for flexibility in the organisational structure and reporting lines in the top tiers of the Council, Assistant Directors had not been listed individually, but were captured within the definition of “chief officer” under the Localism Act.
- Chief Officers could receive performance related pay of up to 10% of their salary.
- The pay ratio, or pay multiple, was used to express the relationship between the remuneration of the chief officer/highest paid employee and that of other employees. A ratio of 8:1 meant that the highest paid individual earned eight times more than the lowest paid individual. The Chief Executive was at £156, 473 and the lowest grade at £19,308.
- Members were advised that the Council applied the NJC national pay agreement. Appointments were normally made at the minimum of a pay grade, but managers could appoint at higher at their discretion.
- Market supplements could be applied should a position prove difficult to recruit to in accordance with policy.
- The Chief Executive’s salary was in line with nationally negotiated rates.

- The Gender Pay Gap report had been published earlier in the year. The Pay Policy was required to be published by the end of March so was late.
- Barbara Batchelor informed the Board how the Council compared with Reading, Slough, West Berkshire and Windsor and Maidenhead for salaries. In terms of the highest salary and the ratio to the highest salary, Wokingham was slightly higher than Windsor and Maidenhead. Slough, West Berkshire and Reading were higher than Wokingham. With regards to the highest salary to the median Wokingham at 4.8:1; was lower than the other four authorities. The Chief Executive's salary was slightly lower in West Berkshire but higher in Slough, Reading and Windsor and Maidenhead. Members requested that further comparative salary data for the other Berkshire authorities be provided.
- Councillor Munro questioned whether Adult Social Care remained a vulnerable area in terms of recruitment and retention and was informed that this remained a national problem.
- Councillor Bray questioned whether the lowest grade was above the National Living Wage (NLW) and the Real Living Wage (RLW), and if this could be reflected within the Policy or its covering report when considered by Council. Councillor Bishop Firth questioned whether the Council paid above the National Living Wage and the Real Living Wage for all except interns and apprentices. Barbara Batchelor agreed to confirm.
- Councillor Bishop Firth asked about the Council's policy on the remuneration of the lowest paid workers. Barbara Batchelor commented that the lowest grade paid £19,308 (£10.01p per hour) and that this was stated within the Pay Policy. Councillor Bray questioned whether there was a policy in place regarding keeping this at a certain level. Barbara Batchelor confirmed that payments were in accordance with the NJC Pay Awards. The Council's lowest paid worker earned more than the lowest paid workers in Reading, Slough, and West Berkshire.
- Councillor Bishop Firth questioned whether the Real Living Wage scheme could be considered and brought to a future meeting. Barbara Batchelor advised that once the Council became accredited as part of the Real Living Wage Scheme, it would not have control as to what the RLW could be. If it increased significantly in comparison to the NJC and NLW increases, it could have an impact on the first four pay bands, and then a trickle up effect throughout the organisation. There would also be implications for school staff, contractors, and partner organisations such as Optalis.
- In response to a question as to whether appointments were ever made at below the minimum pay scale, Barbara Batchelor indicated that they were not.
- Councillor Jones noted that Assistant Directors received between £73,000 and £87,000 and asked how this compared to other authorities. He felt that the salary gap between Directors and Assistant Directors was widening.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Pay Policy be recommended to Council subject to the amendments discussed at the meeting.

19. ANNUAL EQUALITY WORKFORCE MONITORING REPORT

The Board received the Annual Equality Workforce Monitoring Report.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The data contained within the report related to the data collation as at April-June 2021. It provided an analysis of the Council's workforce demographics against that of the Borough. The report had been prepared at a time when severe austerity as a

result of Covid had been experienced. Key areas covered included gender, age, ethnicity, and disability.

- There were approximately 1,400 members of staff.
- With regards to gender, there was a reasonable split between men and women in the Borough. In the Council 73% of staff were female and 27% were male.
- 53% of staff earning over £50,000 in the organisation were women. There were a higher proportion of female staff in entry level posts. As the salary bands increased so too did the number of women in those bands.
- The age gap in staff was largely reflective of the Borough. Whilst there had been an increase in leavers aged over 60, there had been an increase in the number of starters in the younger age groups under 29.
- The number of apprenticeships had increased to 73.
- 5% of the workforce had reported a disability. Staff were encouraged to disclose any disabilities so that any necessary adjustments could be made to support them.
- With regards to ethnicity, 16% had declared that they were from an ethnic minority background. 18% of staff had not declared their ethnicity. Barbara Batchelor explained that the way in which ethnicities data had been grouped was different from previous reports.
- Staff could disclose their religion and sexual orientation should they wish.
- Over the last reporting period 20 members of staff had been through formal Grievance, Capability or Disciplinary processes. Councillor Bishop Firth commented that the number of staff of an ethnic minority who had been through a formal employment relation case in 2020-21, seemed high. Members sought information as to the type of employee relation cases and the outcomes.
- Members asked whether there any indications of the number of staff who had gone through formal employment relation cases in 2021-22 and were informed that there was not yet. It was noted that the number had dropped in 2019-20, potentially as a result of Covid, and many staff working from home rather than the workplace.
- The Board discussed staff with disabilities. Members were informed that within the Borough 20% of adults with learning disabilities were in paid employment. Councillor Bishop Firth asked for information on the number of working age adults in the Borough with disabilities.
- Councillor Bray expressed concern regarding capability and grievances relating to disability and questioned whether lessons had been learnt from a previous case. Barbara Batchelor commented that 19 recommendations had come out of the specific case, 12 of which were completed and the remaining 7 were in progress. The Board felt that it would be useful to understand how lessons had been learnt.
- Members were reminded that the Council operated a guaranteed interview scheme for candidates with disabilities who met the minimum requirements of a role.
- Councillor Bray went on to ask about making reasonable adjustments for Councillors with disabilities and which department was responsible for ensuring this.
- It was noted that the report contained one incorrect figure and a typo, which would be corrected.

RESOLVED: That the 2020 - 2021 Annual Equality Workforce Monitoring Report be approved subject to the minor amendments discussed.

20. RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTORS HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT (HR&OD)

The Board received a report regarding the recruitment process for the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The campaign was in progress and had gone live on 16 May. Adverts had been placed in the Municipal Journal, the Council's website, LinkedIn and the Guardian online website. The advert had closed on 20 June. In response to a Member question it was clarified that the Guardian Online had been recommended by the Council's recruitment partner, Solace.
- A virtual long listing process had taken place on 27 June and technical interviews had been carried out on 4 July. A short list meeting would take place on 12 July. Following this, candidates would undergo an assessment centre comprising of psychometric tests, written exercise, a role play exercise and a panel interview with members of CLT, on 18 July. Final Members Interviews would take place on 27 July.
- Members felt that in future it would be helpful to consider the process prior to it having begun. Barbara Batchelor referred to the change in the Council's Constitution regarding the appointment of Assistant Directors.

RESOLVED: That the report regarding the recruitment process for the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development be noted.

21. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board agreed the following meeting dates:

- Tuesday 27th September 7pm
- Tuesday 22nd November 7pm
- Monday 27th February 7pm

22. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

23. AGENCY WORKER USAGE

The Board considered the Agency Worker Usage Q4 report.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations set out in the Part 2 report be agreed subject to the amendments discussed during the meeting.