

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

29 JUNE 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors S Wilcox (Chair), Powell (Vice-Chair), Robertson and Mears

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Banevicius, Bragger, Harvey-Coggins and Hawkins.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed as a correct record.

4 UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023

The committee received the updated annual Pay Policy Statement for 2023 and were informed that it was the Council's duty to publish such reports under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

It was also noted that the report this year included provision for annual performance related bonuses, an employee referral bonus scheme and an enhanced benefits package including private health insurance.

The following points were raised by Members regarding the performance related bonus scheme

- There was no robust evidence that these types of schemes work in the public sector
- Schemes like these had been ceased elsewhere as Officers worked harder because they felt valued not due to financial incentive
- There was merit in trialling the scheme and results should be reviewed by the Committee.
- It was noted that it would help promote what outstanding performance looked like in the organisation.
- There should be clear criteria for success and the moderation process was well received by the Committee.

The referral bonus scheme was then discussed, and it was agreed as a positive step and the Committee were reassured to note that even with referrals given, the usual recruitment and probation processes would still be followed.

The enhanced benefits package was discussed, and it was noted that although the current scheme was the standard offering seen in many local authorities, this did not mean the market should not be tested for a better offering.

There was much discussion regarding a provision of private health care with the following points raised.

- Officers already pay for health care via National Insurance contributions

- There has to be consideration that it is public money.
- It had been asked for in staff surveys and is common practice in private sector.
- It would help officers recover from illness quicker and therefore return to work sooner.
- It was noted that this would be subject to monitoring and an annual review to confirm the impact of the benefit and clear communications with staff would be key.
- It was noted that many of what would be covered by the scheme were “self-referred” services which for people who work, a charge would be made. It was reported that it through a limited workforce pilot last year physiotherapy was offered to prevent long term absences. The benefits from helping individuals access these types of therapeutic and holistic services could be seen following this pilot. It was also reported that the scheme would provide services like eye tests to all staff, not just those who use display screen equipment. It was agreed that these benefits should be stated in the report before going to Council for approval.

RESOLVED: (1) That the contents of the updated Pay Policy Statement as set out in Appendix A be updated to include the arguments for the private health care scheme and the offer of extra “self-referred” services as well as the requirement for the Employment Committee to receive a report in 12 months reviewing performance related bonus and ongoing monitoring of all other schemes as stated in the reports be approved and recommended for approval by Full Council on 11 July 2023.

- (2) The Pay Policy Statement be updated to include provision for:
- Annual performance related bonuses
 - Employee referral bonuses
 - An enhanced benefits package, including private health insurance

(3) That delegated authority to the Assistant Director Operations, Regulation & Enforcement in consultation with the Chair of this committee, to update and republish the pay policy in respect of the pay spine set out at Appendix 1 to the report and any ratios once the national pay negotiations for 2023 are concluded and when Joseph Rowntree Foundation Living Wage rates are reviewed.

5 GENDER PAY GAP

The Committee received an updated report on the Gender Pay Gap for 2022/23. It was reported that the annual publication of such a report was a statutory requirement. It was reported that there had been a marginal shift from that last annual report and the Council was substantially lower in the pay gap than the national average for the public sector as a whole. The Committee were reassured however that the organisation would not be complacent in this and would continue to target resources to push for further improvements and closure of the gap.

The Committee noted that there was still a gender gap in the joint waste service however this was being addressed with a number of females joining the work force including a driver to the team.

The following points were discussed

- That there should be a consistent approach to the use of gender terminology throughout the report.
- The Committee were pleased to note that facilities for female joint waste staff were more than adequate.
- That election staff were not required to be included in the report as they are employed for one to two days only.
- That a new section in the report to report any bonuses as previously discussed would be added.

- That the Committee should consider at a future meeting whether a similar report regarding disability should be developed.
- That the work in reducing gender pay gaps should be congratulated and promoted and all links to the report should be ensured to work to ensure this.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and the Gender Pay Gap figures for 2022 be noted and approved for publication.

(The Meeting closed at 6.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN