

**STAFFING COMMITTEE
Monday 12 February 2024**

Present:- Councillor Alam (in the Chair); Councillors Allen, Read, T. Collingham and Tarmey.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

8. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

Consideration was given to the report which provided detail of the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25 that the Council was required to publish under Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011. The format and content of the Pay Policy, attached at Appendix 1, was prepared in accordance with guidance previously issued by the Regional Local Government Employers Association and reflected good practice. It was a forward-looking report.

The pay relationship section of the Policy indicated that the Council fell well below the threshold indicated by the Hutton review, in terms of the 'pay multiple'. It was clarified that the Council did not have or intended to introduce any bonus schemes.

It was noted that there could come a time whereby all posts of an Assistant Director level and above may fall into the publication threshold. Every Council would be in a similar position therefore consideration may be given to moving the threshold at that point. However, no review was planned.

Once approved the Policy would be published on the Council's website.

The Pay Policy would be presented to Council on 28 February 2024 for final approval.

Resolved:

That the Staffing Committee:

1. Accepted the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25 (Appendix 1).
2. Recommended approval of the statement by Council.

9. GENDER PAY GAP STATEMENT 2023

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the gender pay gap information as at the 31 March 2023, that the Council was required to publish. The Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations were introduced in 2017 and required employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations each year.

The report looked back to the previous year and once approved would be published on the Council's website.

The mean gender pay gap for the Council at the end of March 2023 was 7.3% compared to 8.5% the previous year. In addition, the median pay gap had also reduced from 10.2% to 8.7%. This meant that when comparing the mid-point of all males' salaries with the mid-point of all females' salaries, the gap had reduced by 1.3% to 8.7%.

There was no legislative requirement to publish information on other protected characteristics, however analysis for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees showed the Council had a negative 9.6% median pay gap but a positive 0.7% mean pay gap. This meant that when assessing the mean hourly rate of pay for BAME employees against the mean hourly rate for non-BAME staff, BAME employees were in roles that overall meant they were paid 11p per hour less. For disabled employees a negative median of 13.7% (up from 10.4% last year) and a negative 4.3% mean (up from 3.3%) demonstrated that disabled employees were paid more than non-disabled employees by both measures.

In response to questions it was explained that facilities services had a larger proportion of female employees. This was due to the roles within that service area, which included catering and cleaning staff for example.

In response to questions it was also confirmed that the target was parity however it was important to be realistic. The Assistant Director stated that the fact the figures were heading in the right direction was positive.

The Chief Executive confirmed that work was ongoing in terms of recruitment and job evaluations. It was important to note the impact of part time working (particularly for women) and the impact of caring responsibilities. The Chief Executive stated that the Council was a good recruiter of people with disabilities.

Resolved:

That Staffing Committee:

1. Accept the Gender Pay Gap Statement at Appendix 1
2. Approve publication of the Gender Pay Gap Statement at Appendix 1.

10. ARMED FORCES RESERVES POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which sought support to implement the Armed Forces Reserves Policy and ensure that both current and future workforces were aware of the Council's positive statements of commitment. The Armed Forces Covenant Duty provided a legal obligation on certain public bodies that were responsible for delivering statutory functions in healthcare, education and housing services and required those delivering local services to pay due regard to the Covenant principles when exercising functions in these areas. The Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant Duty in March 2018 and more recently, in January 2024.

Alongside the Covenant was an employer recognition award scheme. The scheme awarded bronze, silver and gold awards for organisations that pledged, demonstrated or advocated support to defence and the armed forces community, and aligned their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. Rotherham Council was awarded silver in August 2018 and re-accredited in late 2023. The Council aspired to achieve Gold in 2024.

The Council needed to demonstrate that certain criteria were met in order to apply for the Gold award, of which there were nine areas of compliance in total. One of these areas was to actively ensure that the workforce was aware of positive policies towards defence people issues.

Whilst the Council already had positive measures in place to support reservists in its existing policies, these were now combined into an overarching Armed Forces Reserves policy, which had been developed to ensure compliance with the criteria.

The new commitments for the Council was to promote volunteering with the cadet forces from the workforce, by providing paid time off for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) for their summer camp. This provision was 5 working days and 3 days for those involved in the planning of training activities, subject to operational circumstances and to ensure service impacts were minimised.

The Committee fully supported the Policy and requested that a review of the impacts of the Policy be reported back to the Staffing Committee in 12 months.

Resolved:

1. That the Staffing Committee approve the introduction of the Armed Forces Reserves policy (Appendix 1.)

11. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items of business requiring the Committee's consideration.