

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

2 MARCH 2020

PRESENT

Councillor J. Bennett (in the Chair).

Councillors D. Acton, A. Akinola, J. Holden, B. Rigby and R. Thompson

In attendance

Sara Saleh	Corporate Director Of People
Jane Le Fevre	Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy
Angela Beadsworth	Head of Workforce and Core Strategy
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.M. Whyte, M. Cordingley and P. Lally

21. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

23. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy introduced the report and informed the Committee that it contained information on the Councils Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21, in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement included the Councils gender pay gap information which was published annually. The Statement covered chief officer appointments and showed pay ratios between the top to median worker and Chief Executive which was 1:6.92 and the ratio of median chief officer to lowest paid staff Member which was 1:5.71. The Committee were informed that these ratios were well within the recommendations set by the Hutton review.

The mean gender pay gap was 10.7% and the median was 20%. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy explained that the gender pay gap was skewed by a number of factors including the number of female employees who worked part time compared to male workers. When only looking at full time employment the mean dropped to 3.51% and the median was 6.58%.

Councillor Acton asked if there was anything that the Council could do to reduce the gender pay gap. The Corporate Director of People responded that the council's traded services staff members were mainly female and this is the reason why the percentage was higher.

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Councillor Holden asked why there was a gender pay gap following the review of pay that had been conducted. The Corporate Director answered that there was a difference between the role reviews (job evaluation) and the gender pay gap as job evaluation made sure that people were paid right for the work that they did whereas the gender pay gap looked only at individuals' salary and gender.

Councillor Akionola asked whether the Council had statistics across ethnicity in addition to gender. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy informed the Councillor that the Council did have that information and could provide it for the Committee but they only had to publish gender data for the gender pay gap purposes.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted by the Committee.
- 2) That the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved and recommended to Council.

24. AGENCY SPEND Q3

The Corporate Director of People assured the Committee that the Council had robust policies in place to ensure that agency workers were only hired when it was necessary to do so. The Corporate Director then proceeded to present the report to the Committee. The Committee were informed that all of the agency spend was met within staffing budgets although there had been an increase in spend during this quarter and compared to the previous year.

The total spend during the quarter was £617,000 with some social workers being hired off contract due to not having an adequate number available through the contract. Councillor Acton noted the continued shortage of qualified social workers and how a national solution to the problem was needed. Councillor Rigby added that this was a problem in the private sector as well due to the lack of qualified people.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

25. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY

The Corporate Director of People informed the Committee there had been seven approved extensions. One within Children's Services had been extended for a month, within Adult Services two had been extended for three and two months respectively, within Governance and Community Strategy one had been extended by two months and within the People Directorate one person's leave had been extended by a month.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

26. WORKFORCE UPDATE

The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy informed the Committee that the update covered the period from November 2019 to January 2020. The update had been arranged to align with the key themes of the people strategy.

Starting with the recruit and attract section of the people strategy the Head of Workforce and Core Strategy informed the Committee about the updated guaranteed interview scheme for groups who find it hard to gain employment. The scheme had been expanded to include ex-military and care leavers so they were guaranteed an interview if they met the job specification criteria. The Council had also started using a new recruitment system which aided people in completing applications by saving what they input so they did not have to spend time filling out the same information in multiple applications.

Moving onto the engagement section, the results from the B-Heard survey had been shared with the Corporate Leadership Team in December. Since then the results had been circulated to colleagues and a corporate action plan was being developed for improvement. Part of the action plan was to improve engagement within the Council over the next year. This was to be achieved through a series of actions such as enabling senior leaders to communicate with staff in a more informal manner.

The EPIC manager model had been further developed to enable managers to be their best and help their teams achieve their full potential. Work was ongoing across all directorates to identify areas of best practice and how staff members could learn from each other. The Council were running “Let’s Talk” sessions which gave the opportunity for staff members to share ideas and learning. These sessions were followed up with a “you said we did” document showing the impact the sessions had upon the Council as a whole and how their feedback had been taken on board.

In sickness absences Trafford were ranked fifth when compared with the other Greater Manchester Authorities which was the same level as in previous quarters. The Corporate Director of People added that the Council had some very poorly individuals who had been on long term sickness leave which had skewed the statistics.

The Council were looking to refresh the apprenticeship tool kit to help ensure that all apprentices had a great experience within the Council which would prepare them for work afterwards. A full calendar of wellbeing events had been run in the New Year including sessions by Offload who helped staff deal with mental health issues and encouraged them to open up and seek help if they need it.

The Council were also looking to improve support for staff with disabilities by refreshing policies through continued engagement with disabled staff. Improvements that had been made so far included additional disabled car parking bays, changes to the email footer so that if people needed adjustments they can ask for them, and changes to the room booking system with more information on where to get information and assistance.

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Following the overview of the update Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions. Councillor Holden asked whether the guaranteed interview scheme had any legal issues regarding human rights. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy informed the Committee that the legal team had been consulted and they had confirmed that it did not violate any legislation. The Corporate Director of People added that the remainder of hiring the process was conducted in the same way as the programme only affected the invitation to interview.

Councillor Akinola asked that the updated footer be shared with the Committee. The Councillor then asked whether the Council had seen a pattern between making it easier for people to apply and less people turning up for interviews. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy responded that it was too early to tell and it was hoped that such a pattern would not emerge.

Councillor Rigby noted the drive behind the increased engagement but asked whether the Council had the capacity to make those processes robust and to deliver the ambitious engagement strategy. The Head of Workforce and Core Strategy stated that as a re-structure of the HR Service had been completed last year they were aware of the resources available and the strategy had been developed with that level of capacity in mind.

The Chair requested to look at the feedback from those who are unsuccessful in interview.

Councillor Akinola stated that she found it difficult to follow the colours on the graphs within the update and asked whether they could be changed so that it was easier to distinguish between them.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the updated email footer be sent to Committee Members.
- 3) That the colours within the graphs be revised to make it easier to distinguish between them.

27. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION (REMAINING ITEMS)

Motion (Which may be amended as Members think fit):

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of “exempt information” which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

28. REALIGNMENT OF CORPORATE LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIOS FOLLOWING THE STRATEGIC SERVICES REVIEW AND PROPOSALS FOR THE RETIREMENT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND SYSTEMS

The Corporate Director of People introduced the report to the Committee and went over the main highlights. The Council were looking to adjust to the current climate which was clear within the Council's Corporate Plan, Epic Values, and People Strategy. The Council needed to modernise in order to keep up with increasing demand in a time of reduced resources. The Council had worked alongside modernisation colleagues in developing its plan for transformation. As part of the transformation the Council needed to update its senior management structure to make sure it was fit for purpose. The Committee were informed of the changes that the structure had been through.

The Committee were told that the Place directorate had been working to employ someone to the position of Development Director but their attempts had been unsuccessful. Market research had found that Trafford were offering less than the market rate and it was proposed that the Council add a supplement to make the salary more competitive.

The Corporate Director of People explained to the Committee that the Corporate Director of Finance and Systems was looking to retire. As part of their retirement the Council and CCG were looking at separating out the different elements of this role. This would lead to a number of changes to the Council's structure including STAR Procurement moving to the Governance and Community Strategy directorate.

These changes were to be reflected in a change of the titles, roles and responsibilities of the Council's Corporate Directors. Communications had begun with those who would be directly impacted by the changes within the report. The report ended with six recommendations which the Corporate Director of People explained to the Committee prior to asking them for their approval.

The Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions. Councillor Thompson asked for clarity regarding the Director of Finance and Systems salary level compared to the Director of Development. The Corporate Director of People responded that the amounts offered for both positions reflected competitive salaries as shown by the Council's market research.

Councillor Rigby raised a question as to why this item had been discussed in its entirety in the closed section of the meeting. The Councillor noted that there were some elements that should have been in part two of the meeting but there were many items within the report which should have been made open to the public. In response to the Councillors question the Corporate Director of People and the Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy explained the reasons why the report was being discussed in part two of the meeting.

Following the questions the motion was raised to agree recommendations two and four of the report. Five Committee Members voted in favour and Councillor Rigby voted against so the motion was passed and the recommendations were agreed.

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RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That all the recommendations of the report be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.07 pm