

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**4 SEPTEMBER 2023**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor J. Bennett (in the Chair).

Councillors F. Hornby (Vice-Chair), D. Acton, Babar, S. G. Ennis, W. Jones, J. Leicester, and A.M. Whyte

#### In attendance

Angela Beadsworth	Director of Human Resources
Emma Malpas	Head of Legal and Governance
Catherine Hay	Pay and Reward Lead
Pelumi Coker	Legal Assistant
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer
Harry Callaghan	Governance Officer

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S. Zhi.

### **8. MINUTES**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

### **10. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions were received.

### **11. AGENCY SPEND Q1**

The Director of Human Resources introduced the agency spend report and noted that the level of agency workers within the Council had been a recurring concern for the Committee for a long time. The Committee were assured that the Council only used agency workers as a last resort following a robust vacancy management process. While the Council's level of spend on agency resources was higher than the Council would like, Trafford was still performing better in this regard than other local authorities within Greater Manchester.

The Director of Human Resources then went through the report noting the agency assignments by directorate and confirmed that the largest number of assignments were in Children's and Adult Services. The number of agency workers had increased slightly since the previous quarter, but this was expected due to school summer holiday's falling within that quarter. The work around the Greater Manchester Pledge for social worker agency prices was continuing to develop and

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as Trafford had one of the lowest levels of agency staffing costs, they were working to ensure the pledge did not lead to an increase. The Director of Human Resources concluded the introduction by highlighting where overall spend in the quarter had increased or decreased by Directorate.

Following the introduction Members were given the opportunity to make comments or ask questions. Councillors Hornby, Babar, Leicester, Jones, and Acton asked a series of questions covering the breakdown of information provided, possible increase in staff wages to reduce agency, the Councils recruitment plans, and shortages in qualified people to fill positions. The Director of Human Resources was able to answer all of the Councillors questions to their satisfaction. The Director of Human Resources also agreed that agency fees would be shown in future updates to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a breakdown by department of percentage of workers who are agency workers be provided to Committee Members.
- 3) That a breakdown of agency fees be included in future reports to the Committee.

**12. SPECIAL SEVERANCE PAYMENTS**

The Director of Human Resources introduced the report and informed Committee Members that the Government had updated the guidance around severance payments in May 2023. The report detailed the approvals process for the special payments with the Committee being informed of the approval requirements for each payment. The Committee were informed that any payments for the Head of Paid Service would require the Council to consult two Independent Persons. The Director of Human Resources concluded the introduction by restating the recommendations of the report.

Following the introduction, the Chair welcomed the changes and the formalisation of the process. Councillors Hornby and Leicester asked questions regarding the new approach and when it would be applicable. The Director of Human resources provided detailed responses to the Committee and the Councillors were satisfied with the responses received. Councillor Hornby felt that the Council could go further than the legislation required with regards the differences in approach according to age as shown on page 22 of the document pack.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the new statutory criteria and approval for special severance payments and reporting requirements be noted.
- 3) That the approvals for the guidance and process be noted.
- 4) It be noted that, as part of the approval requirements, proposed payments of £100k plus will be submitted to the Employment Committee prior to Council for approval.

**13. EMERGENCY DUTY SOCIAL WORK MARKET SUPPLEMENT**

The Pay and Reward Lead introduced the report by explaining the staff who would be eligible for the payment, that the payment had been in place for two years, and that the recommendation was to extend the market supplement payment for a further two years. The Committee were informed that the market supplement brought Trafford to the middle level of pay compared to other authorities and made the Council competitive within the employment market.

Following the introduction, The Chair and Councillor Acton both welcomed the report and voiced their support of the continuation of the market supplement.

Councillors Jones and Leicester asked whether there were any plans to make the supplement permanent and how successful it had been so far. The Pay and Reward Lead provided in depth responses to the Councillors questions and confirmed that the payment was temporary and linked to market conditions at the time.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the continuation of the payment of Market Supplement of £3,366 per annum for a further 2 years with an annual review as per the policy be noted.

**14. LEGAL TEAM MARKET SUPPLEMENT PAYMENT**

The Head of Legal and Governance introduced the report and informed the Committee of the difficulties the Council was having in recruiting qualified and experienced staff which included having to compete with other Councils and agencies for the limited pool of suitable professionals. The Council were looking at multiple approaches to increase the attractiveness of Trafford as an employer with one strand of that approach being benchmarking pay compared to other authorities. The market supplement proposed was the result of the benchmarking exercise and represented an amount that would make Trafford competitive within the marketplace.

Following the introduction, the Chair and Councillor Acton welcomed the report and spoke in favour of providing a market supplement for legal officers.

Councillor Babar asked how many lawyers were employed for the roles listed on page 23 of the report. The Head of Legal and Governance responded to Councillor Babar that she did not have the figures to hand but would provide them after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report and its recommendations be noted.
- 2) That the information requested by Councillor Babar be provided by the Head of Legal and Governance.

**15. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY**

The Committee were informed by the Director of Human Resources that there had been four exception requests received in the last quarter and all four had been approved.

Committee Members were then provided the opportunity to make comments or ask questions, but nothing was raised.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00 p.m. and finished at 5.53 p.m.