

HR Committee

23rd September 2021



Report of: Director of Workforce and Change

Title: Update on key HR matters

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Mark Williams, Head of Human Resources

Contact Telephone Number: 07795 446270

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

Summary

Members have requested a regular update report on key HR matters that affect the workforce. The report provides an update on current HR policy consultations, national pay negotiations and the Senior Coroners Pay Settlement.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Consultation is currently taking place on a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy to comply with new legal requirements for those working in Registered Care Homes to be fully vaccinated with effect from 11 November 2021.
- The National Employers have made a final pay offer of 1.75% from 1 April 2021. This offer relates to the vast majority of the Council's workforce. The trade unions are currently consulting their members on the pay offer and the outcome of the consultation will be known at the end of the month.
- The National Employers have made a final pay offer of 1.5% to the JNC for Chief Executives and JNC for Chief Officers. This pay offer affects the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Directors. This committee will need to consider whether to apply those pay settlements locally when the outcome of the negotiations is known.
- The JNC for Coroners has agreed a pay uplift of 1.5%, which has been implemented and backdated to 1st April 2021.

Policy

1. The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service has the delegated authority to approve all the Council's HR policies. The Human Resources Committee determines whether to apply national pay settlements to the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.

Consultation

3. Internal

Not required because this report is for information only.

4. External

Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

5. Members have requested a regular update report on key HR matters that affect the workforce. The report provides an update on current HR policy consultations, national pay negotiations and the Senior Coroners Pay Settlement.

HR Policy consultations

6. The most significant consultations taking place now relate to reforms to our Travel Policy which is the subject of a separate agenda item at this meeting and a new COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for workers in Registered Care Homes. The new legislation which was passed on 22nd July 2021 requires all employees who work in Registered Care Homes to be fully vaccinated from 11 November 2021, as well as anyone who enters a residential care home for professional purposes. The new Vaccination Policy sets out the arrangements for existing staff as well as new joiners. We are continuing to encourage all employees to take up the offer of the vaccine through continued support from Public Health and our NHS colleagues. The Trade Unions are supportive of our approach. Employees who do not wish to be vaccinated will have the opportunity of redeployment into current vacancies where there is not a need for a vaccine. If this is not successful, their contracts of employment will be terminated but we will also offer further access to our redeployment pool during their contractual notice period. The government has recently commenced consultation on extending the scope of the regulations to include all other health and social settings and making Flu vaccination compulsory.
7. We have also recently consulted on modifications to our Probationary Policy and Code of Practice on Investigations. These policies will be finalised by the end of the year and published.

National Pay Negotiations

8. Circulars to employers on the status of national pay offers from 1 April 2021 are attached at Appendix A. The trade unions are consulting their members on the offers and the outcome of the pay negotiations is likely to be known at the beginning of October. The circulars set out the status of the negotiations and the reasons for the National Employer's offer. The offers and numbers of employees affected is summarised below:

- Single Status - 1.75% from 1 April 2021 (6,645 employees)
- Craft Worker - 1.75% from 1 April 2021 (302 employees)
- Chief Executives - 1.5% from 1 April 2021 (1 employee)
- Chief Officers - 1.5% from 1 April 2021 (14 employees)

9. The Council has paid the Living Wage Foundation rate of £9.50 per hour to all employees on Bristol Grades 1 to 4 inclusive – as well as apprentices – since 1 April 2021. This is a higher rate than the pay offer made nationally for the lowest earners covered by the national agreement.
10. Currently, through the Pay Policy Statement agreed at Council annually, the power to apply national pay settlements to the Chief Executive, Executives Directors and Directors is delegated to the HR Committee. When these national pay negotiations are concluded, the Committee will be asked to consider the matter.
11. The JNC for Coroners agreed a 1.5% increase in pay backdated to 1st April 2021, which has been implemented for the Senior Coroner (as required in her terms of office), the Area Coroner and the Assistant Coroners.

Proposal

12. That the Committee notes this report

Other Options Considered

13. None.

Risk Assessment

14. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 15a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;

- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

15b) Not required because this report is for information only.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The uplift in the pay of the senior coroner is in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment.

Once the outcome of negotiations is known, it is within the Terms of Reference of the Human Resources Committee to determine whether to apply the JNC Chief Executives and Chief Officers pay awards for 2021/22.

Husinara Jones, Team Leader/Solicitor 13 September 2021

Financial

(a) Revenue

(b) Capital

The Council's budget for 2021/22 assumed funding of £0.5M for pay settlements in accordance with the government's pay policy for 2021/22. The pay offer of 1.75% for employees covers the vast majority of Council workers and will cost an additional £2.9M in 2021/22. Funding will need to be identified to meet these costs if the pay offer is agreed nationally

Michael Pilcher, Chief Accountant 15 September 2021

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

A Employers Pay Offer – 27 July 2021

B JNC for Coroners – Pay Settlement 2021 – 2 August 2021

Background Papers: None.