

HR Committee

17th February 2022



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 HR policy activity and national pay negotiations.

The significant issues in the report are:

- On 31 January 2022, the Government announced that the regulations requiring staff to be vaccinated in Registered Care Homes and Care Quality Commission regulated activities will now be revoked, subject to public consultation and Parliamentary approval. Until the regulations are revoked, our current COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will apply.
- An update is provided on the National Industrial Action pay ballots that have taken place and the current status of pay negotiations.



Policy

1. The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service has the delegated authority to approve all the Council's HR policies.

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 and national pay negotiations.

HR Policy consultations

3. A new COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for workers in Registered Care Homes which came into force from 11 November 2021 and requires them to be vaccinated. The new Vaccination Policy sets out the arrangements for existing staff as well as new joiners. The policy is due to be extended to Care Quality Commission regulated activities from 1 April 2022. On 31 January 2022, the Government announced that the legal requirement to be vaccinated will now be revoked subject to public consultation and Parliamentary approval. Until the regulations are revoked, our current COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will remain in force. We hope that the regulations will be revoked by 31 March to avoid any difficulties with staff affected by the extended regulatory arrangements due to come into force on 1st April 2022.
4. Proposals to revise our Code of Practice on Investigations received wide ranging and extensive feedback. It is anticipated that the new policy will be in place by 1 April 2022.

National Pay Negotiations

5. The committee received a report on the status of the national pay negotiations at the last meeting of the committee. The national pay offers for Single Status and Craft Workers from 1 April 2021 have been rejected by the trade unions. The current situation in respect of each trade union is set out below:-
 - GMB conducted a consultative ballot to determine whether to proceed to a formal ballot on Industrial Action. The consultative ballot closed on Monday 13th December 2022. GMB have decided not to undertake an Industrial Action ballot
 - UNISON balloted their membership on Industrial Action. Although the ballot was in favour of Industrial Action, the turnout was below the threshold of 50%. Therefore, UNISON will not take Industrial Action.

- UNITE will be commenced a ballot on Industrial Action on 14 January 2022 and this will close on 17 February 2022.

6. 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)

7. Until the outcome of the UNITE ballot is known, it is understood that there will be no further talks between the Employers and Trade Unions at a national level.

8. 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. The Living Wage will be uplifted to £9.90 per hour from 1 April 2022.

9. There is a separate report at this meeting covering the national pay settlements to the Chief Executive, Executives Directors and Directors.

Proposal

10. That the Committee notes this report

Other Options Considered

11. None.

Risk Assessment

12. 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

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

Not required because this report is for information only.

(b) Capital

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None.