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AGENDA

Meeting of: **Staffing Committee**

Date: **Monday, 9th October 2023** Time: **7:30 p.m.**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above Meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

To be present: Councillors

P.	Barlow (Chairman)
S.	Ager
L.	Barlow
B.	Fleet
P	Heath
J.	Martin

Nikki Smith
Town Clerk

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 21st AUGUST 2023**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held 21st August 2023 (*previously circulated*).

4. **NJC PAY CLAIM 2023-2024**

To receive an update on the 2023-2024 NJC Pay Claim attached at Page 3 .

5. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

To review, amend and adopt the Pay Policy Statement, attached at Page 4.

6. **STAFF HANDBOOK**

To review, amend and adopt the Staff Handbook (previously circulated) .

7. **MENOPAUSE POLICY**

To review, amend and adopt a Menopause Policy, attached at Page 9.

8. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

TO RESOLVE That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

To receive an update on the Investors in People accreditation.

10. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

To receive a report from the Town Clerk on matters arising.

11. **STAFF REMUNERATION**

To receive a report on Staff Remuneration.

12. **TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL**

To receive a report from panel members on the Town Clerk's Appraisal and remuneration.

The Town Clerk will leave the Chamber while discussions take place.

13. **STREETWARDEN UPDATE**

To receive a verbal report on the Street Warden vacancy recruitment.

Officer Report: NJC Pay Claim 2023-2024Latest Update September 2023

The National Joint Council (NJC) pay award for 2023 has not yet been agreed nationally.

The NJC trade union side met on 19 September to discuss the national employers' full and final pay offer, but no decision on the pay offer was reached. The trade unions have confirmed they will reconvene after GMB's ballot closes.

The GMB ballot will run from Tuesday 12 September to Tuesday 24 October 2023.

August 2023: update

Earlier this month, the three NJC trade unions [wrote to the employers](#), asking them to return to the negotiating table. The [employers responded](#) on 17 August, confirming that their original offer is the final offer and that no further ones will be made.

At this point in time, UNISON has confirmed it will not be asking its members to take industrial action.

GMB Union has announced it will be conducting an industrial action ballot of members working for more than 2,000 local authorities in September and October, and will be asking those members to vote for strike action.

In Unite's recent industrial action ballot, the requirements for industrial action were met in 23 local authorities; Unite members are now preparing to announce industrial action across regions in England and Wales. Unite is also re-balloting in certain councils, where action is strongly supported by reps and members.

Advice: To receive and note.



Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

- 1) Scope
- 2) Pay Determination
- 3) Remuneration for Town Clerk
- 4) Remuneration for all other employees
- 5) Termination of employment (severance)
- 6) Fairness in Pay
- 7) Publication of Pay
- 8) Gender Equality
- 9) Legislative Changes
- 10) Review

Reviewed at a meeting of the Staffing Committee 9th October 2023

1) Scope of this Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

1.1) This Pay Policy statement is produced in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011. It was approved by Witham Town Council (“the council”) on 14th May 2020 through the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee. It is made available on the council’s website.

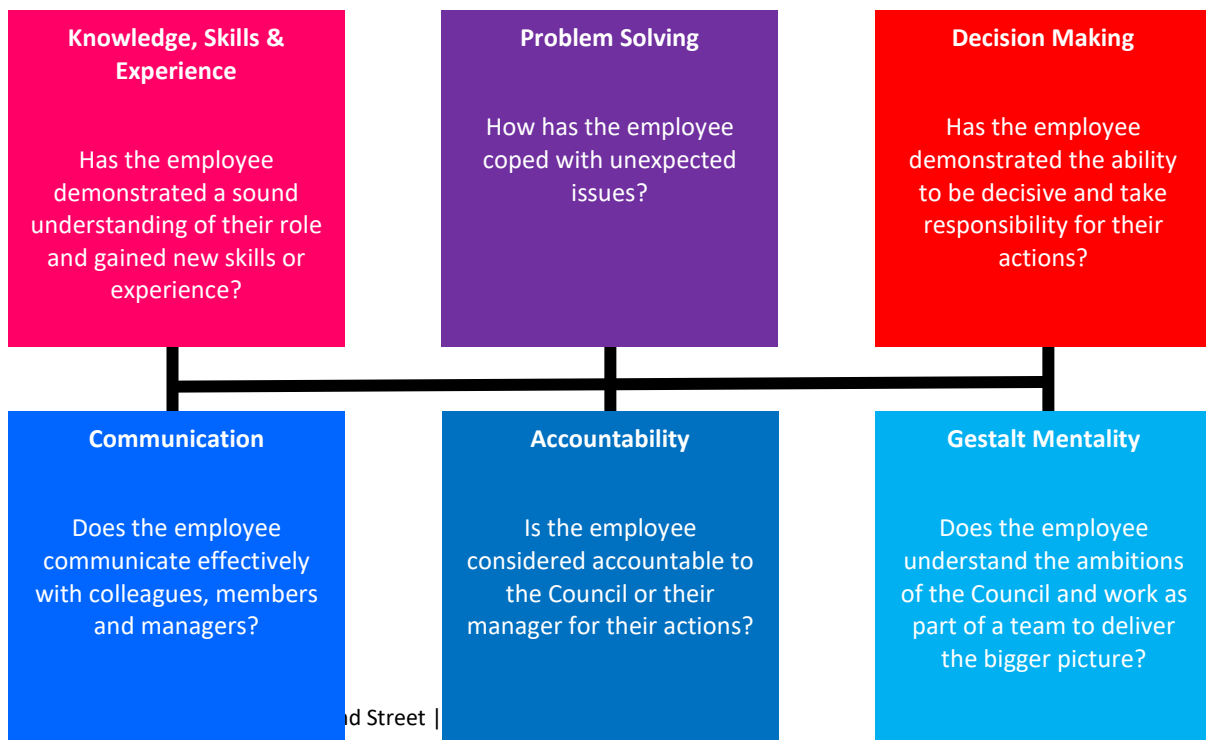
Although the council is not deemed a ‘relevant authority’ according to the Localism Act 2011, our commitment to the highest level of transparency and robust governance is reflected in publishing this Pay Policy Statement by going above and beyond the statutory expectations as set out in legislation.

Included in this Pay Policy Statement (“this statement”) are the council’s pay and reward policies for that are designed: - to enable the council, as an employer, to retain competitiveness in the market place, and to maintain affordability of employment costs.

The council’s Staffing & Accommodation Committee determines the terms and conditions of employment for all staff within the scope of this statement, including the application of any discretion available under the Local Government Pension Scheme (“LGPS”). It will act as the “remuneration committee” for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011. The Town Clerk has delegated powers to implement actions that affect terms and conditions of employment that have first been agreed through the council’s Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee.

2) Pay Determination

2.1) The determination of pay is no longer conducted via the annual appraisal but by a 360 degree evaluation process, as recommended by Investors in People. The Town Clerk is responsible for submitting remuneration recommendations to the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee. Proposals should be assessed against the Council’s Remuneration Award Matrix encompassing the following six key points:



2.2) Pay Bargaining & Negotiation

The Council pays due regard to the 'Green Book' as agreed via the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services and is committed to awarding the agreed pay and conditions as set out in each agreement regardless of trade union membership.

2.3) Appointments

~~The point at which an individual will be appointed within the pay grade will normally be the minimum of the scale. However, appointment may be at a higher point within the scale where justified. Progression within a pay grade Each pay grade contains a number of pay points called "spinal column points" (SCPs).~~

~~Once the employee reaches the maximum spinal column point (SCP) of the pay grade for the role there is no further increase unless a nationally negotiated pay award is given. Increases may be withheld from an individual as a consequence of disciplinary action. New starters must complete a nine-month probationary period before being eligible to receive an increase.~~

~~The ability to recommend an additional increase beyond the maximum ceiling for each employee is reserved to cases where an outstanding contribution has been made to the Council by an employee or where the scope and duties of the job role have expanded sufficiently to justify an increase in pay.~~

2.3) Allowances

The council does not operate a car allowance scheme. Mileage incurred by employees performing duties on behalf of the Council is reimbursed via the mileage claim system and paid up to the HMRC limit.

The council does not operate a performance pay scheme outside the pay grading structure that determines basic pay and therefore there are no performance or bonus payments paid to employees of the council.

3) Remuneration for Town Clerk

~~A panel of three members of the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee are responsible for conducting the Town Clerk's appraisal and making a recommendation as part of that appraisal to the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee. The committee will determine any awards to be made to the Town Clerk taking into account the six key criteria under Section 2 of this document.~~

4) Remuneration for All Other Employees

The Town Clerk shall be responsible for submitting a summary assessment of all staff remunerations via the Remuneration Award Matrix and submit such recommendations to the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee ahead of the annual budgeting process.

5) Termination of Employment (Severance)

5.1) Local Government Pension Scheme

Membership of a pension scheme is determined by the relevant conditions of service and is subject to the rules of the specific scheme. The council operates the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for most employees. For members of the LGPS made redundant on their 55th birthday or later, early access can be gained to their pensionable benefits based on service and salary. Although the LGPS provides for the exercise of discretion that allows for retirement benefits to be enhanced, the council has a policy of not enhancing pension benefits.

The LGPS can also be accessed before normal retirement date for employees who are unable to continue with employment on the grounds of their ill health and who satisfy the conditions for ill-health retirement. An amendment to the LGPS effective from 1st April 2014 allows employees aged between 55 and 75 to choose to access their pension; however, it is at a reduced rate if taken before normal retirement age. The introduction of Auto Enrolment means that new employees to the council, who meet certain criteria, automatically join the LGPS.

5.2) Redundancy Payments

Where an employee is made redundant, severance benefits may be payable subject to the conditions and terms of the redundancy. Where a redundancy payment is made, they are calculated on the basis of 1.5 weeks' gross pay for every complete year of service up to a maximum of 104 weeks. This calculation applies equally across all pay grades.

5.3) Re-engagement of former employees

The council's policy is that there is no general restriction on any future re-employment of an employee who has been made redundant or who is in receipt of a Local Government or other public sector pension. In fact, to adopt policies to the contrary could be subject to challenge under equalities legislation. However, re-employment must be on merit and should be unconnected with the redundancy, except where alternative employment is found and pension and redundancy payments are returned in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The council does not approve of redundancy or early retirement due to redundancy and immediate re-employment of staff either as direct employees, via an agency, or on a consultancy basis. If there are any exceptional circumstances that might appear to justify such arrangements, these must be agreed by the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee with sufficient justification from the Town Clerk.

6) Fairness in Pay

The council recognises the importance of fairness in pay. Pay and reward policies are applied equally to all employees, except where there are good reasons reflecting genuine factors which apply only to certain employee categories. Any consideration of varying the equal application of any policy in relation to pay and employment must be approved by the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee.

7) Publication of Pay

The council publishes information about pay in accordance with statutory requirements, and the guidance of the Information Commissioner's Office and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Information is published on the council's website in the council's annual accounts.

8) Gender Equality

The council is fully committed to equality by ensuring that all pay policies are applied equally to all employees as it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their gender.

9) Legislative Changes

From time to time as required, the council will amend its policies, procedures and practices to ensure that it complies with its legislative duties and will ensure that employees are advised of the changes.

10) Review

The council will continue to review all pay levels to ensure fairness and equity. Any changes will be reflected in an updated pay policy. The policy will be reviewed by the Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee on an annual basis and submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee for ratification.

Witham Town Council: Menopause Policy

This policy sets out the guidelines for member of staff and councillors on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Witham Town Council staff and councillors. The policy applies to all stages of the menopause: perimenopause, menopause and post menopause.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the town council's policy and practices.
- Educate and inform staff and councillors about the potential symptoms of menopause and suggest how they can support their colleagues, who may be experiencing symptoms, at work.
- Ensure that colleagues suffering with menopausal symptoms feel confident to discuss it, ask for support and ask for any reasonable adjustments that allow them to continue to be successful in their roles.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure staff that the town council is a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

Definitions

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a person's life that occurs when they stop menstruating and reach the end of their natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when someone has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for people reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a person to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a person may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

Symptoms of Menopause

It is important to note that not every person will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of people do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some people also experience difficulty sleeping.

Roles and Responsibilities

Members of staff are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Speaking to the town clerk if they have any issues.

- Being open and honest in conversations with the town clerk/staffing committee.
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Town Clerk:

- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates.
- Ensure that adjustments are adhered to.

Symptom Support

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively those listed below. Support for individuals should be considered as detailed below:

Hot flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk, or moving away from a heat source.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.
- Permit staff to work from home for a time, where possible.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to drinking water.
- Offer a quiet place to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open spaces.
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

Difficulty Sleeping

- Consider flexible working, particularly if suffering from lack of sleep.

Low Mood

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to (outside of the work area if possible).
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'.

Loss of Confidence

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development discussions.
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues.
- Have agree protected time to catch up with work.

Poor Concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory assisting equipment.
- Offer a quiet space to work.

- Offer noise reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Reduce interruptions, where possible.
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed.
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Promote the Mindful Employer – 24-hour counselling helpline service, available to employees.)
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.
- Encourage and allow reasonable time for mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited the GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety. If they have visited their GP and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace.

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Town Clerk may:

- Discuss with the staff member a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.
- Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, were reasonably practical.
- Update any action plan and continue to review.