

Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th July, 2022.

Present:- Councillors Ali (Chair), Bal (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Basra, M. Bedi, Gahir and Smith

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Grewal

PART 1

7. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bal declared that his daughters worked for Slough Borough Council.

8. Pay Policy Statement Update 2022/2023

The Associate Director, Customer, highlighted that the Pay Policy Statement had already been approved by this Committee and subsequently by full Council, in February 2022. It had now been brought back to the Committee in an updated version following the conclusion of national pay negotiations, so now included updated pay scales and officers occupying Chief Officer roles.

Following Government statutory guidance on special severance payments which needed a higher level of scrutiny, the Council pay policy also confirmed that any redundancy or severance package of £100,000 or more would be approved by Full Council.

In answer to a question from Members the Associate Director clarified the roles specified in the report as currently attracting a retention payment and interim arrangements paid at a daily rate, and the Chair requested that in future figures presented in the report accurately reflected what was actually being paid for each position, rather than an overall salary band. Members also requested figures on the number of staff currently receiving acting up payments and the number of staff receiving honoraria payments and the Associate Director agreed to provide these figures to a future Committee.

The Chair asked about the figures given in the report showing the relationship between the remuneration of the Chief Executive and the lowest and median paid employees, and whether there was any policy to narrow the gap, the Associate Director confirmed that the Council followed national payscales, and that Slough Borough Council fell in the mid-range in comparison with other Councils in this area. In answer to a request for providing a quarterly monitoring report on staff pay by grade, the Associate Director agreed to discuss with the Chair what reporting could be provided for the Committee going forward and timescales.

Resolved – that the Committee recommend to full Council approval of the revised Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23.

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9. New Management Structure

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and the Monitoring Officer presented the report, which addressed the long-term path to recovery for the Council. The current constraint for recovery was corporate capacity. The new structure outlined and suggested in the report would be revisited during the medium term, but it was what officers believed was needed at this time.

The proposal was to move from a six to a seven directorate model, with a slightly different structure as detailed in the report. The recruitment timetable was set out, but it was highlighted that this was aspirational and that having interims for some posts initially was likely. The budget needed was increased from the current structure, and this would be funded from the capitalisation project initially. Some of the suggested new roles were over £100,000 so would be subject to approval by full Council, in accordance with the Localism Act.

Some Members raised concerns that there had been restructures before, which had been unsuccessful, and wanted to see accountability and a change of values in the council. The Monitoring Officer explained that the organisational restructure could not deal with or resolve all of the issues overnight, but it was judged to be the right start and direction of travel. In answer to a request for more detail on the suggested structure, the Executive Director outlined that further detail was provided in other reports eg on the finance and digital restructures that had gone to Cabinet and which were available to view on the SBC website.

Asked about the effects of the changes for residents, it was explained that if the investment was not made now at this level there would be problems ahead. The restructures also made lower level changes where needed, such as in customer services and other front-line services. These had been done through the Customer Scrutiny Committee, and had seen 18 people recruited with a training programme underway and improvements already in evidence.

In answer to a question on how IT improvements would help residents who were not able to access or use IT or a computer, it was explained that as processes improved, there would be more resources available to help those residents where needed. The structure would have a Head of IT for the first time and proper accountability for the IT service.

A Member asked if this committee would have a process in the appointment of the new senior roles suggested in the report. The Monitoring Officer explained that the decision on appointments would sit with the existing Appointments sub-committee, but there would also be a legitimate role for this committee in reviewing and keeping track of progress on the appointments.

Some concern over risk categories was raised, with a worry that the risk scores were high overall, and the question of how often would the risk table be revisited and progress checked against risks. It was outlined that the Audit

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and Corporate Governance Committee met 4-5 times per year and received a council-wide risk analysis, and that this had been considerably improved in the last year, this committee also published a risk report which was available to view. The Corporate Leadership Team would also receive risk analysis on a monthly basis starting imminently, and officers were also promoting that each department had its own risk-register to feed into the process.

Members expressed concern that the previous restructure had cost the Council £1.25m in contractors fees and had not been successful, and that the current proposed restructure cost would be £4m. The Monitoring Officer explained that the previous contractors were commissioned to assist with delivery of a project, and it was for officers to ensure ultimate delivery and success, and could not offer more comment about that in a public forum as current senior officers were not here at that time. Investment was needed at this stage or things would not improve for residents and funding was currently available from the corporate investment programme.

Members requested a progress report on the new structure in 6-9 months and this was agreed.

Resolved – That the Committee:

- Note the proposed new structure
- Recommend to full Council the approval of:
 - a) A new chief officer structure as set out in Appendix 1, to include an additional chief officer:
 - b) A new deputy chief officer structure as set out in Appendix 1, to include changes to existing Associate Director (AD) service responsibilities and the creation of new deputy chief officer roles, including a Chief Digital Officer at a top salary range of over £100,000.
 - c) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend Article 12, Part 3.6 and Part 7 of the constitution to reflect these changes.
- Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to undertake consultation of the proposed structure and agree the final details for the ED and AD roles, including the services to be managed under each.

10. ICT and Digital Restructure

This item was withdrawn as the relevant matters relating to ICT and Digital Restructure were incorporated into the New Management Structure Report at Agenda Item 9.

11. Date of Next Meeting - 12th October 2022

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 12th October 2022.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.36 pm)