

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment and Appeals Committee **DATE:** 12th July 2021

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(For all enquiries)

WARDS: All

PART I FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

GENDER PAY GAP

1 Purpose of Report

To present to the Committee the 2020 Slough Borough Council statutory gender pay gap figures and report for review and comment.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

That the Committee note the independently calculated and verified results of the 2020 gender pay gap for Slough Borough Council employees and proposal to develop a new action plan.

3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

(a) Reducing inequalities and promoting improved outcomes for all groups relates to all aspects of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy's priorities.

(b) Five Year Plan Outcomes

Reducing inequalities and "closing the gaps" is a cornerstone of the vision expressed in the Five Year Plan. Maintaining a committed, talented and inclusive workforce is central to delivering the Five Year Plan Outcomes.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action in terms of allocated budgets.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
Compliance with Gender	Legal challenge of non-	Gender Pay Gap has been		

Pay Gap Reporting	<p>compliance with duty to report gender pay gap.</p> <p>Inequality in the workforce can affect recruitment and retention of staff</p> <p>Can help identify any potential areas of indirect discrimination</p>	independently audited and verified as accurate and compliant, based on all currently available payroll data.		
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

It has been a statutory duty for the council to publish its gender pay gap annually from March 2018. Enforcement action was suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and has been further extended in 2021.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The obligation for organisations to calculate and publish the differences between what women and men earn, on average, in their workplaces provides transparency; it aims to promote inclusion and gender equality in terms of pay. No negative equality impacts are identified. Previous action plans have been subject to an EIA and any future actions which are developed as a consequence will be subject to an EIA.

Workforce

The council is committed to being an inclusive employer, attracting and retaining a talented and committed workforce from all backgrounds. It is also committed to promoting gender equality and reducing the gender pay gap where possible.

5 Supporting Information

- (a) All organisations employing more than 250 staff are required by law to publish their gender pay gap annually. SBC has met this obligation each year, including in 2019/20, when the government suspended enforcement action on any organisation which did not report by the March deadline, due to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence only half of eligible organisations submitted data in 2020 and there is mounting concern that lack of public scrutiny on gender pay gaps will hamper gender equality going forward. In February 2021, it was announced that there would be a further 6 month extension on the reporting of the 2020/21 gender

pay gap until 5 October 2021. Whilst no enforcement action will be taken for non-compliance before this date, organisations are still encouraged to publish their pay gaps and remain committed to progressing gender equality.

- (b) Overall gender equality is a strength at SBC and we have reported a lower than average pay gap in the past. The council employs more women than men in all pay quartiles and in the last staff engagement survey (Oct 2020), 70% of respondents agreed that there was gender equality for staff. However, as is the case in many organisations, women remain under-represented in the most senior positions and gender occupational segregation can still be seen in some areas. As a council it is essential that we remain fully committed to calculating and publishing our gender pay gap figures as this is crucial in promoting wider diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- (c) As we go on to understand the long-term impact of the pandemic on our staff, it becomes even more important to collect and report such data in a transparent way. There is growing evidence that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the gender pay gap in the UK: indeed, it is likely to have a devastating impact on gender equality in the workplace in the longer term. Women are more likely to be employed in sectors (retail, leisure, hospitality) that have been severely affected by economic restrictions. They are also more likely to have been impacted by school closures and other caring responsibilities, resulting in them reducing hours or leaving the labour market entirely.
- (d) The workforce transformation programme will also impact future GPG figures. The impacts of Phase 1 will be seen in the 2021 figures, with the impacts of Phase 2 seen from 2022.
- (e) 2020 Figures (please see Appendix A for full report)

These calculations have been externally audited by RSM (HR) Ltd. The figures show that on mean average, women **earn 10 % less than men**. This is an increase in the mean pay gap from last year (3.1%). The median average has remained at negative value of -3.1%, **meaning that women’s median pay rate is higher than that of men’s**. This gap has slightly increased in favour of women from last year (-2.8%).

Mean gender pay gap %	10 %
Median gender pay gap %	-3.1%

In real salary terms:

- Mean male hourly rate: £18.62
- Mean female hourly rate: £16.75
- Median male hourly rate: £14.93
- Median female hourly rate: £15.39

- (f) Important actions have been taken in the past 3 years. These include the establishment of an SBC Women's Network, quarterly reporting of diversity and recruitment statistics to the Corporate Management Team, and the introduction of "blind" recruitment processes at all levels (where candidate details are removed at shortlisting stages). Throughout the pandemic, HR policies and advice has been constantly evolving to support all staff. The council has sought to support its employees to balance the many demands of working from home, caring and home-schooling. It is also recognised that new, agile and flexible ways of working are welcomed by the majority of staff and this will be continued once we come out of the pandemic, enabling more opportunities and improving well-being.
- (g) The council is in the final stages of a major transformation programme and staff restructure. This will impact on future gender pay gap figures and it will be important to understand the opportunities to improve gender equality, and the final impacts on gender representation at all levels within the organisation
- (h) A new gender pay gap action plan will be developed, taking into account the impact of the transformation programme as this draws to a conclusion.
- (i) The gender pay gap figures will be published on www.slough.gov.uk and also on the national gender pay gap website <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/>

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

SBC is committed to gender equality and our gender pay gap figures show a negative median gap in favour of women. However, the mean gap has increased and there continues to be under-representation of women in the most senior roles. Whilst many positive actions have been developed to support the female workforce during the past 12 months, these need to be continued and developed as we emerge out of the pandemic and commence our new operating model.

8 **Appendices Attached**

'A' - 2020 Gender Pay Gap Report

9 **Background Papers**

1. Five Year Plan