

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st March, 2024**

Report Subject: **Pay Policy Statement 2024/25**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council/
Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
Circulated to DMT on 14/2/24	29/2/24						21/3/24	Circulated to Trade Unions on 16/2/24

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the Pay Policy Statement for the period 2024/25 (appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to prepare and publish an annual Pay Policy Statement which must set out the Council's policies in respect of the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (Chief Officers) and its lowest paid employees to provide openness and accountability in relation to the Council's approach to pay and reward.

- 2.2 The Statement must comply with the following:

- Be prepared for each financial year;
- Be approved by Full Council before the 31 March each year;
- Be published on the Council's website;
- Come into force and be complied with from the date of its approval and be subject to a review on a minimum of an annual basis in accordance with the relevant legislation prevailing at that time.

- 2.3 In "performing its functions" under the act the Council must also have due regard to any relevant guidance including the Welsh Government Pay Accountability in Local Government guidance and must set out the following:

- Policies relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers and its lowest paid employees.
- The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and employees who are not Chief Officers.
- State its definition of "lowest paid employees" and the reasons for adopting it.
- Policies relating to the other terms and conditions applicable to Chief Officers.

- 2.4 The Act does not require the Council to use the Pay Policy Statement to publish specific numerical data on pay and rewards. However, the Council considers how information set out within the Pay Policy Statement fits with data on pay and rewards required to be published under the Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.5 The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine referred to as the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) as the basis for its local grading structure. This determines the salaries of the large majority of the workforce. The NJC pay award for 2024/25 is currently pending, as is the pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and staff employed under the Soulbury Committee.
- 2.6 This Pay Policy Statement does not apply to staff of local authority schools who are subject to separate regional arrangements and Members of the Council as they are not employees and are governed by separate legislation and the requirements of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.
- 2.7 The Council has commissioned an external specialist to carry out an independent equal pay audit in respect of the Council's workforce employed on NJC terms and conditions as at 31 March 2023. The methodology for the audit was based on the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on equal pay auditing. Reference to this work has been included in the Pay Policy Statement.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** (preferred option) That Council consider and approve the Pay Policy Statement.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** That Council consider and make suggestions/comments to add to the Pay Policy Statement.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 The Pay Policy Statement will assist the Council to secure and maintain a suitable workforce which is required to deliver and develop its statutory responsibilities and also priorities and services covered in the Corporate Plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no direct financial implications from the publication of the Pay Policy Statement. National pay negotiations for 2024/25 are ongoing at the time of writing.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

The risk of not adopting the Pay Policy Statement is that the Council will not comply with its statutory obligations in line with the Localism Act 2011.

- 5.3 **Legal**
Approving the Pay Policy Statement ensures the Council complies with the requirements set out under the Localism Act 2011.
- 5.4 **Human Resources**
The Pay Policy Statement provides transparency in relation to the Council's approach to setting the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff and lowest paid employees and meets the statutory duty of implementing national agreements on pay.
- 5.5 **Health and Safety**
There are no Health and Safety implications relating to the approval of the Pay Policy Statement.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 **Performance Information and Data**
N/A
- 6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
Producing an annual Pay Policy Statement provides the public with information to ensure the Council is open and transparent with regards to pay and reward.
- 6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
The trade unions have been consulted and they suggested some amendments which have been considered in the development of the policy.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The Council is committed to providing quality services which offer value for money. The Pay Policy Statement seeks to ensure the Council attracts, retains and motivates the best employees with the right skills.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
N/A
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
N/A
- 6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
N/A
- 6.8 **Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions**
There are no direct implications arising from the publication of the Pay Policy Statement.
- 6.9 **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)**
N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Pay Policy Statement will be reviewed and updated by Organisational Development on an annual basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025