

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 14 FEBRUARY 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AUTHOR: CARMINE RABHANI

SUBJECT: PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024-25

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks approval to publish the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25. The publishing of a Pay Policy Statement is an annual requirement which must take place by 31st March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Approve the Pay Policy Statement; and
- [2] Authorise the Head of People and Organisational Development in conjunction with the Director of Governance, to make any in-year changes to the Pay Policy Statement necessitated by new legislation, guidance or organisational change.

Background

2. As a result of the Localism Act 2011 all local authorities are required to publish a pay policy statement on an annual basis. This sets out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the pay of Chief Officers and that of other employees.
3. This requirement was introduced in order to:
 - Increase the accountability, transparency and fairness of the setting of local pay;
 - To give local people access to information to allow them to determine whether pay is appropriate;
 - To ensure the pay of senior staff is fair in the context of the pay of the rest of the workforce;
4. The information within a pay policy statement must include the policies relating to the level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer, including salary, bonuses and any benefits in kind.

5. The definition of “Chief Officer” for purposes of this Authority and the pay policy statement means Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the two Statutory Officers, i.e. the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer (Treasurer).
6. In terms of transparency, this Authority already publishes information on its website relating to the pay of senior officers including the salaries, allowances and benefits in kind, paid to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and the two Statutory Officers.
7. In addition to this, the Authority also publishes the number of other employees whose salaries exceed £50,000 within certain pay bands which is in compliance with the guidance in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 which recommends that all salaries of senior post holders over £50,000 are published. The Minutes of the Brigade Managers’ Pay and Performance Committee are also accessible via the Service’s website.
8. As the Pay Policy Statement has a number of prerequisites in relation to content and information, there have not been significant changes to the version that was approved last year.

Information

9. The Pay Policy Statement 2024-25 is attached to this report as Appendix 1. The paragraphs below describe the changes that have been made since the last version was published. They also provide some additional context associated with the Statement.
10. Lowest paid employees: A decision was made by Members during the 2018-19 financial year to make the minimum rate of pay for all Service employees no less than the Living Wage (LW). The LW is reviewed and adjusted every October. The current rate is £12.00 per hour and is intended to be payable to all those over 18. The Pay Policy Statement has been updated with the new rate. All staff are paid more than the LW.
11. Re-engagement: This section has been updated to reflect the current position outlined in the Authority’s ‘Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy’ which was approved by Members in 2021. It outlines the circumstances where re-employment will be allowed subject to key criteria being met along with compliance with pension and tax rules. The Service has recently recruited a number of retired operational staff to roles where their previous skills and experience have been deemed critical to current business needs. Importantly, it also makes it clear where re-engagement cannot take place.

12. Relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees: The pay multiple between the highest paid Officer and the lowest paid employee should not exceed 1:20. The current calculation for this is a multiple of 1:7.43, compared with 1:7.9 last year.

Financial Implications

13. The Pay Policy Statement is intended to provide transparency and a clear rationale to explain the Authority's approach to pay.

Legal Implications

14. The requirements under the Localism Act to produce and publish the Pay Policy Statement supplement the existing duties and responsibilities of the Authority as an employer, particularly its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to avoid discrimination and provide equal pay. Since the Statement contains policies concerned with remuneration rather than information relating to individuals, the provisions of the Data Protection Act are not engaged. Where the salary of senior post holders is published, outside the Pay Policy Statement, it is done so in order to comply with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The Pay Policy Statement will assist the Authority to: monitor remuneration across the Service; and provide a fair system of remuneration which avoids discrimination.
16. The Service seeks to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Pay Gender Gap reporting by publishing its annual Gender Pay Gap Report.

Environmental Implications

17. There are no environmental implications.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: