

## **Human Resources Committee**

**Date of Meeting: 15 February 2022**

**Report by: Head of HR & OD**

**Report title: Gender Pay Gap Report 2021**

**Ward(s) affected:** None

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### **Summary**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR (Human Resources Committee):**

- (a) To note the Gender Pay Gap Report 2021**
- (b) To agree the action plan 22/23**

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 This report sets out the outcome of the Gender Pay Gap report 2021, reports progress on last year's action plan and outlines new actions for this year.
- 1.2 Leadership Team agreed the report and action plan on 25 January 2022.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In 2017 the government introduced legislation that made it statutory for organisations with 250 or more employees to report on their gender pay gap by 30 March 2018 and annually thereafter. As well as publishing our gender pay gaps we follow the best practice in terms of sharing the full report by providing a link so that the public can view our analysis and the actions we are taking to address the gap.
- 2.2 East Herts Council published its first gender pay gap

report in March 2018 for the snapshot date of 31 March 2017. This is the council's fifth gender pay gap report for the snapshot date of **31 March 2021**.

- 2.3 The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between men's and women's average earnings across an organisation. It is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.
- 2.4 The data the council is required to provide includes mean and median pay gaps; mean and median bonus gaps; the proportion of male and female employees who received bonuses; and the proportion of male and female employees in each pay quartile.
- 2.5 The gender pay gap is different from equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because they are a man or a woman. All jobs at East Herts are put through a 'Hay' job evaluation scheme to ensure the right grade and pay is given to jobs.

### **3.0 Report**

#### Review of action plan

- 3.1 In our last gender pay report published in March 2021 we prioritised areas for action to reduce our gender pay gap. Here we report our progress.
- 3.2 The mandatory annual equalities e-learning course has been developed to include unconscious bias training and this has been completed by staff this year. Recruitment training will be given to all managers in

2022 as part of a new management development programme and unconscious bias will be included in that training. HR will continue to send out unconscious bias guidance to recruitment panels.

- 3.3 The HR team have been encouraging managers to try to ensure that interview panels are as diverse as possible and some 'meet the team' sessions have taken place virtually (due to the pandemic) as part of recruitment processes in the past year. Ultimately some teams are limited in terms of how diverse they are so it is not always possible to demonstrate a full range of diversity in every recruitment process however the case studies also demonstrate and welcome diversity for the council see below.
- 3.4 We have developed 4 case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce that are published on the Council's job pages of the website. We plan to ask for further staff volunteers to feature on this page.
- 3.5 An ATS has been purchased that enables name blind recruitment. This is in the implementation phase and should be live in early 2022.

#### 2021 figures

- 3.6 As can be seen in the report (Appendix A), the median gender gap has remained the same as 2020 and the mean gender pay gap has increased by 3 percentage points from the 2020 figures.
- 3.7 The Council's mean gender pay gap has increased by 3 percentage points when compared to 2020. The Council's overall headcount has reduced by 24 since 31 March 2020 (from 348 headcount last year to 324 this year). This equates to 11 less male and 13 less female

employees. As there are far fewer men employed by the Council, the number of men employed by the Council have reduced proportionally more than the women (the ratio as at 31 March 2021 was 28% male to 72% female compared to 31 March 2020 where the ratio was 29% male and 71% female). As the mean is an average calculation and the highest earning male employee and lowest earning remain the same as 2020 but it is averaged over a smaller number, this has brought the mean hourly pay rate for men up further than for women.

- 3.8 The data shows that for Q1, 2 and 4 the percentages are either identical or very similar to 2020. In Q3 the percentage of men has decreased by 4 percentage points. This is disappointing as it has been an ongoing action for the Council to try and increase the number of males in our lower graded posts.
- 3.9 We are confident that the gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work. All jobs are evaluated using the HAY job evaluation method and the council has a pay and grading structure agreed with Unison.
- 3.10 The council's mean gender pay gap is slightly less than median gender pay gap because there are more women than men employed in senior roles and the mean is more skewed by the extremes. The median figure represents the 'typical' man or woman (i.e. the man/woman in the middle of the male/female pay range) and is due to the greater proportion of men in the upper pay quartiles compared with lower pay quartiles, and a greater proportion of women in the lower pay quartiles compared with the upper pay quartiles. This is partly due to our organisational structure. The council has outsourced services such as

refuse and grounds maintenance which are predominately male dominated areas of work. If these services remained in-house the proportion of male and female employees in the lower pay quartiles would be much more even. The types of roles typically found in the council in the lower quartiles tend to be customer facing or administrative in nature and currently are occupied predominately by women.

### Action plan for 22-23

3.11 We have already taken forward several actions since the Council's first gender pay gap report in 2017 and will continue to build on these. Rather than create new actions, the actions below have been taken from the general equalities action plan (published in November 2021) which already considered gender based equality actions for the Council:

- Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme. Offer further equalities based training as identified by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the OD and HR Co-ordinator.
- Continue to provide flexible working opportunities including blended working to support women and job progression.
- Each interview panel chair to continue to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as

possible to applicants of all backgrounds.

- Work with Communications to add to the existing set of staff case studies on the Council's recruitment pages and develop more variety. We will continue to try and demonstrate diversity in our workforce and if possible they will include men in roles in the lower quartiles (especially in Customer Services and Administration) and higher graded female employees. Willing employees would need to be identified to become case studies but we need role models to try to break down more traditional stereotypes and career norms.
- Implement an ATS that will include an electronic application form which automatically directs applicants to the equalities monitoring form and also enables name blind recruitment.
- Deliver management development in 2022 to all line managers to cover Recruitment, Performance Management, Managing difficult behaviour, Managing Change and Managing Absence. This will upskill and support development of all managers including junior managers/team leaders where we have high numbers of women (Pay Quartile 2 = 63% and Pay Quartile 3 = 86%) who we will therefore further support in terms of development and then hopefully progression into the upper quartiles of pay.

#### **4.0 Options**

N/A - publishing the Gender Pay Gap figures on an annual basis is a statutory requirement.

#### **5.0 Risks**

N/A

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

Yes – as described in the report

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

No

### **Health and Safety**

No

### **Human Resources**

Yes – as described in the report

### **Human Rights**

No

### **Legal**

No

### **Specific Wards**

No

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

7.1 Appendix A – Gender Pay Gap Report 2021

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