

# BEST VALUE COMMISSIONERS

## Equal Pay Board

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Time: 14:00hrs

Location: Room 125, Council House

### **Board Members:**

Pam Parkes, Commissioner and Chair  
John Biggs, Political Advisor  
Katy Fox, Director of People Services  
Alan Downton, Equal Pay Programme Lead  
Rishi Shori, Deputy Managing Director  
Craig Cooper, Strategic Director, City Operations  
Andy Vaughan, Director, Street Scene  
Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance and S151 Officer  
Peter Sebastian, Head of Service, Finance  
Philip McPherson, Oracle Programme Lead  
Rob Harris, Head of Service, Legal  
Eleri Roberts, Assistant Director, Communications  
Cllr John Cotton, Leader  
Cllr Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for HR & OD  
Will Moody, Acting Business Support Manager

### **Apologies**

None recorded.

### **1 Welcome & Introductions**

1.1 Pam Parkes welcomed everybody to the meeting.

### **2 Previous Minutes & Actions**

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and recorded as an accurate reflection.

### **3 Equal Pay Program Update**

3.1 Timeline: Still tracking for 1st April 2025. No major issues to flag; remains broadly on track and is delivering where it needs to deliver.

3.2 Business Case: The business case is going out for consideration shortly. Amendments to the timeline and further work are needed to draw everything together.

3.3 Employment Committee: Creation of the business case and papers for the employment committee requires approval to address any concerns.

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3.4 P&G Model: A meeting with the Leader and Cllr Pocock is scheduled for next week. The pay and grading model aim to correct a long history of obsolete schemes and eradicate EP issues. Approval is not being sought today but will come to Commissioners in due course.

3.5 Update on WRCO role: Entered a 45-day consultation period, due to close on 18th October. Weekly meetings have been held, and there has been direct engagement with individual staff members. Trade Unions (TU's) are not keen as they feel their messaging is being undermined. Letters, briefings, and group meetings have taken place. Colleagues are confident in BCC's position and understand the implications of the WRCO role.

3.6 Alternative Proposals: TU wish to submit an alternative proposal, which has not yet been done. The consultation may be pragmatically extended to consider this. A formal report will be written advising that the consultation should be closed. The team are of the view that consultation has gone well, and the risk of industrial action has receded due to extensive consultation.

3.7 Meaningful Consultation: The meeting emphasised on ensuring that the consultation is meaningful, especially if another counter proposal is made. Changes in employment legislation could also impact this.

3.7 Parallel Work: Parallel work led by Rob and Andy on the delivery model if there is a dispute is ongoing. Draft procurement documents are ready if TU's move to strike action.

3.8 Task & Finish: Employees have largely been back to work. KC provided advice on task and finish in the audit report, however, on the ground management did not take sufficient action. Productivity concerns are being managed via the waste transformation with H&S currently being the biggest concern. A challenge was made to confirm what evidence BCC has to confirm what BCC say about T&F is the case. It was confirmed there are several audit reports – the first was poor. The last report seen by waste services concludes most workers are back working at 7.18 hours per day. There is a need to ensure there are no similar working practices across the council and a clear definition of T&F needs to be established with robust parameters.

## 4. Job Evaluation

4.1 P&G: Job Evaluation will inform pay and grading model. BCC will have to re-evaluate every role within the Council. To validate P&G model, benchmarking roles need to be completed in first instance.

4.2 Benchmarking: 90 benchmark roles have been sent to WME – 58 have been evaluated. It is estimated to have 155 evaluated by 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

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4.3 Generic Roles: Rumbings around the use of generic roles and adaptability of NJC. Legal advice and advice from fellow Local Authorities (LA's) will be sought. It is not an uncommon practice for job clustering within local authorities.

4.4 Grade Structure: A – D grade structure simulates 1-6 grades, with grades 6 & 7 going into the new pay and grading.

4.5 School Approval: Risk around P&G that has to be approved by individual schools. Action to be brought back.

4.6 Distributional Impact: Work needs to be done to understand the distributional impact of P&G.

## 5. **Litigation and Mitigation:**

5.1 Best Value: BCC are seeking to agree on a value-for-money settlement with TU's. Good progress is being made.

5.2 TU Negotiations: TU negotiation meetings have started. The council previously wasn't prepared, but BCC now has a firm grip on negotiations. All necessary resources are in place. Hopeful for an agreed position before Christmas.

5.3 Timeline: Best and final offer is planned for 11th November; then Cabinet approval on 12th November. Tight timeline but momentum is building. Verification and assurance are being undertaken on the data. Independent assurance is needed upon signing legal agreements. Emergency Cabinet meeting will be called to push a mandate through if required.

## 6. **Contract Implementation:**

6.1 Contract Creation: Working with legal on contract creation. Four options have been brought in to tidy up loose ends, deal with policy issues, new legislation, allowances, and equality clauses. Expected sign off is 17th Jan 2025.

## 7. **Comms and Engagement:**

7.1 Activities: Webinars planned, updating intranet, dedicated pages for workstreams. Mapping touchpoints and comms channels.

7.2 Key Messages: Sharing key messages across political leadership. Industrial relations are better than before. There is a system in place to ensure control of messaging should there be a media flare up.

7.3 Programme Team: Reviewing risks, issues, and actions daily.

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## 8. AOB:

8.1 Ballot Notification: Notification of ballot for additional 15 schools by GMB. The threshold for industrial action was not met. There is more confidence in negotiations; less industrial action is expected.

## 9. Actions:

9.1 Risk around P&G and the approval from individual schools to be explored further and reported back.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting:

10.1 Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

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