

Briefing Note of Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development

Corporate Services Cabinet Advisory Committee – 9 March 2016

PROPOSED GENDER PAY GAP PROJECT

1. Context

- 1.1 This Briefing Note provides an update to the discussion that took place at the Corporate Services Cabinet Advisory Committee on 13th January 2016 where an analysis of the gender of the Council workforce was provided.
- 1.2 The Welsh Specific Equality Regulations 2011, the so-called 'Equal Pay Duty' requires the Council to address not only disparities of pay but also to address the structural labour market factors that can cause gender pay gaps.
- 1.3 With this in mind, the Head of HR&OD invited Dr Alison Parken of Cardiff University, the leading research specialist in this area, to talk to Councillor Kirchner and HROD Officers about the research she has undertaken with 3 public sector organisations in Wales, including a Local Authority in South East Wales. A copy of the presentation provided by Dr Parker is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Research into Gender Pay Gaps in Wales – Findings Summary

- 2.1 The research has highlighted a number of issues, particularly the way that the public sector structures jobs and contractual working hours may be contributing to a gender pay gap that could contravene the Equal Pay Duty.
- 2.2 For example, in the Council studied, an analysis of grades 1-3 (lowest paid posts) indicated that women held part time posts while their male counterparts held full time posts, suggesting an inequality in opportunities for career progression. This is due to the traditional notion of 'women's work' being part time, as it is assumed that women prefer this type of work. The research found that this was not the case, as many women undertaking part time work have more than one part time post in order to build their earnings.
- 2.3 More importantly, however, the evidence shows that permanent full time posts are predominantly held by male employees, but the majority of local authority staff are female. This indicates that the way we structure our posts and offer contracted work *could be* contributing to a potential gender pay gap because of the way we are structuring work within the Council.

3. Suggested Actions

- 3.1 The Cabinet Advisory Committee recommends to the Cabinet Member that a project is undertaken to understand our current Gender Pay situation, not only to comply with the Equal Pay Duty regulations, but to assist us with

moving forward to ensuring that we become an organisation that addresses the any potential gender inequalities within the workforce. The Council will be able to utilise the toolkit provided by Dr Parker but at this point in time we are unable to engage her services until the funding for WAVE has been confirmed by them.

- 3.2 We are currently developing a HR Analytics Project that is working on building better workforce data and workforce reporting. The Head of HR&OD suggests that the Gender Pay Gap project is added to this wider programme in order to ensure compliance going forward, with the aim to provide an analysis of any potential gender pay gaps and potential employment practices that could contribute to gender inequality.
- 3.3 Regular updates will be provided to the Cabinet Advisory Committee.

Steve Rees
Head of HR&OD
25th February 2016