

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
2024/2025
Pay Policy Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to transparency of pay, and best value for money to residents in terms of its workforce and the quality of services provided to residents. This statement is required under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 We monitor the Council's benchmark position regularly in London utilising data sets from London Councils, and in particular the annual chief officers' salary survey. This information is used when reviewing pay and grading structures, in combination with data on turnover, recruitment and retention.
- 1.3 This pay policy statement sets out: the Council's current position in the labour market and pay benchmarking, pay ratios, the current pay structure and arrangements, dealing with data transparency and senior officer termination payments.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this statement, "chief officers" includes statutory and non-statutory chief officers and deputy chief officers as defined by section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2. Pay benchmarking

- 2.1 In terms of the senior pay benchmarks derived from the London Councils database we know the Council is positioned broadly at the median for senior pay for the 32 boroughs. Our overall pay rates below chief officer-level also broadly mirror the median for Outer London Local Authorities, but for a number of roles are below this.
- 2.2 The pay benchmarks are reviewed annually to ensure the Council continues to provide good value for money and that senior managers are not paid in excess of local, regional and national labour markets, as appropriate to the job.

3. Pay ratios and Fair Pay in the Public Sector

- 3.1 The Council has a pay ratio of 1:8 between the lowest and highest paid employees (1:9 last year). It should be noted this is well within the ratio level of 1:20 that was established for the Hutton Fair Pay Review (March 2011) to consider.
- 3.2 The Council uses job evaluation to determine an employee's grade and the rates within the grade are determined through national and London-level pay bargaining. The minimum rate of pay for National Joint Council (NJC) employees from 1 April 2024 of £25,584 per annum is based on the nationally determined minimum spine point rate (noting that the 2024/25 national pay

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award has not yet been agreed). Entry-level apprentices receive the London Living Wage. The Council operates a London Living Wage guarantee, which ensures staff on our pay scales receive at least the London Living Wage from 1 April each year. The minimum NJC rate of pay at 1 April 2023 exceeds the London Living Wage. See paragraph 4.1 below for more detail on how we determine grades.

- 3.3 Senior managers are required to demonstrate they are performing to appraisal objectives in order to qualify for incremental pay increases and this pay policy system conforms with the recommendations from the Hutton Fair Pay Review that senior managers' pay includes an element of 'earn back'.
- 3.4 As well as comparing with the lowest paid we also make comparison with the median (recommended in the Government's transparency guidelines). The ratio of the Chief Executive's pay to median employee salary is 1:5. The Hutton report suggested the ratio for the FTSE top 250 private sector companies was 1:38.
- 3.5 The average (median) full-time basic salary for males employed by the Council is £40,833 a year, and the average full-time basic salary for females is £39,264 a year. The basic pay gap between male and female pay is £1,569 i.e., males earn on average more than females, the same gap as last year.
- 3.6 A number of factors have caused this gap in basic pay, notably the TUPE transfer of staff in the past both in and out of the organisation had an impact on the basic gender pay gap. Differing service delivery models can make it difficult to meaningfully benchmark against other councils.
- 3.7 The statutory gender pay gap figures for 2021/22 were published, as required by legislation, by 31 March 2023. The statutory figures include a broader range of pay than just basic salary and will include permanent allowances. The pay gap figures for 2022/23 will be published with this Pay Statement and are attached as Appendix A.
- 3.8 The figures, which include allowances and bonuses, show a decrease in the pay gap compared to 2021/22 between women and men both in terms of mean and of median earnings. The mean gap reduced from 7.5% to 5.9% between March 2022 and March 2023, whilst the median gap was unchanged at 4.5%. Men receive higher bonuses on average, this being mainly due to a high proportion of pay consisting of bonuses in the small mainly male Bailiff service. Bonus for the purposes of statutory publication will include one off retention, long service and merit payments. Bailiffs are the only staff group who earn true bonuses which make up a large proportion of their pay, and where the amount earned is based upon performance
- 3.9 Pending any introduction of statutory pay gap monitoring by ethnicity, the pay gap between White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees has been established and is shown as Appendix B. There is a wider pay gap than for

gender, due to the higher proportion of White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees in lower graded roles. The mean gap reduced from 10.6% to 9.4% between March 2022 and March 2023, whilst the median gap reduced from 10.4% to 8.1%. It should be noted that declaration of ethnicity is optional, and the figures will therefore only cover those employees where they have declared their ethnicity.

4. Current pay structures and arrangements

- 4.1 The Council operates:
- The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for LA Chief Executives, and the JNC for LA Chief Officers pay agreement arrangements &
 - The National Joint Council (NJC) and the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Outer London pay agreement for most posts below Management Grade (MG) and applies the GLPC job evaluation scheme for jobs up to grade ME16. Job evaluation objectively establishes the relative size/value of posts whereas the pay/grade relationship ('price tag') is agreed by the Council with reference to GLPC benchmark guidance. The pay and grading structure below chief officers and Management Grade (see 4.3 below) currently allows for time-served incremental progression on an annual basis up to the grade maxima.
- 4.2 Some other employees are paid on nationally determined pay scales such as: Soulbury, Youth & Community, Teachers, Craft Workers and local conditions.
- 4.3 Senior managers, on grades MGA to chief executive grade are placed on grades with incremental progression on an annual basis or biannual basis. Progression through the grade is dependent upon satisfactory performance. Job evaluation for chief officers and managers above ME16 is conducted using the Hay job evaluation scheme.
- 4.4 Senior staff do not receive bonuses. They contribute from 8.5% up to 12.5% of their salary to the local government pension scheme and Merton's employer contribution to the pension fund for all contributing members is 17.06% from April 2021. In some years the Chief Executive in her capacity as Acting Returning Officer, Returning Officer, or Local Returning Officer will also receive election fees and expenses when UK Parliamentary or local elections occur. Annual cost of living increases are determined nationally.
- 4.5 All matters relating to Chief Officer pay, including the Chief Executive's appraisal setting and assessment are dealt with by the Council's Appointments Committee.
- 4.6 Full Council shall be offered the opportunity to vote on any offer of employment being made where the proposed salary package exceeds £100,000.

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- 4.7 If there is a permanent increase to a Chief Officer's salary (with the exception of any increase in salary due to cost of living (including but not limited to cost of living increases to market supplements or retention supplements) or progression through contractually agreed pay scales) and the proposed salary exceeds £100,000, this must be approved by Full Council. The Chief Executive shall have authority to agree temporary increases in salary for periods of up to one year.
- 4.8 The Council applies the NJC, and Chief Officers pay awards. No national agreement has been reached at the time of writing for 1 April 2024, with any national discussions with the trade unions likely to commence in later in 2024.
- 4.9 Any proposed changes to the pay and grading structure are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to assess the likely impact of the changes.

5. Transparency arrangements

- 5.1 The Council publishes the following information on its website:
- senior employee salaries with: names (for posts in excess of £100k), title, salary band and information including job descriptions that will cover span of control and managerial responsibilities.
 - a schedule of all council employees earning £50,000, or more, in accordance with the recommended code of practice for data transparency.
 - this policy
- 5.2 The Chief Executive's remuneration, that of the Executive Directors, and any officer earning over £100,000, is already the subject of a published statement (Senior Employee's Salaries) on the Council's website. Other salary and budget information is published in the annual statement of accounts, also available from the Council's website.

6. Termination payments

- 6.1 Any termination payment outside of an officer's contractual and statutory entitlement, the value of which is less than £100,000, shall require the approval of the Appointments Committee and does not need to be reported elsewhere.
- 6.2 Full Council shall be offered the opportunity to vote on any termination/severance payment, the value of which is £100,000 or more.
- 6.3 As part of its audit role, the Standards and General Purposes Committee shall be entitled to request a report on termination payments which have been paid from time to time but there is no requirement for this Committee to approve such payments.

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- 6.4 We will continue to review and publish our policy on the exercise of discretions under local authority regulations covering compensation for early termination of employment, redundancy and pension enhancements.

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