

Access to Information Arrangements

Exclusion of access by the public to Council meetings

Information Compliance Ref: LGA- 2354951

Meeting / Decision: Employment Committee

Date: 14th May 2025

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Report Title: Being Our BEST: Implementation of new pay and grading structure

List of Appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: Job categories

Appendix 2: Proposed Pay Model

Exempt Appendix 3: Impact on staff

Appendix 4: Pay protection policy

Exempt Appendix 5: Leadership Pay

Exempt Appendix 6: Avon Pension Fund Market Supplements

Exempt Appendix 7: TU consultation timetable

Exempt Appendix 8: 24th April 2024 letter to trade unions

Appendix 9: Risk Assessment

Appendix 10: Equality Impact Assessment

The exempt appendices contain exempt information, according to the categories set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (amended Schedule 12A). The relevant exemption is set out below.

Stating the exemption:

- 1. Information relating to any individual*
- 2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual*
- 4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.*

The public interest test has been applied, and it is concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. It is therefore recommended that the exempt appendices be withheld from publication on the Council website. The paragraphs below set out the relevant public interest issues in this case.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

If the Committee wishes to consider a matter with press and public excluded, it must be satisfied on two matters. Firstly, it must be satisfied that the information likely to be disclosed falls within one of the accepted categories of exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972.

The officer responsible for this item believes that this information falls within the exemption under paragraphs 1,2&4 and this has been confirmed by the Council's Information Compliance Manager. The following exemptions are engaged in respect to this report:

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
4. *Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.*

Exemptions 1 and 2 above must be considered in conjunction with the Principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). It is considered that disclosure of the information in this report and the exempt appendices would breach the first principle of the DPA, which requires personal data to be fairly and lawfully processed. Exemption 4 relates to information held for the purpose of consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter.

Secondly, it is necessary to weigh up the arguments for and against disclosure on public interest grounds. It is considered that there is a public interest in decisions relating to employee dismissals.

Other factors in favour of disclosure include:

- furthering public understanding of the issues involved;
- furthering public participation in the public debate of issues, in that disclosure would allow a more informed debate;
- promoting accountability and transparency by the Council for the decisions it takes;
- allowing individuals and companies to understand decisions made by the Council affecting their lives and assist individuals to challenge those decisions.

However, there is a real risk that the first Principle of the DPA will be breached by this disclosure, and that the individual/s identified within the report and exempt appendices could bring a successful action against the Council if the disclosure occurred. Secondly, this information relates to consultation and negotiations regarding a current labour relations matter. Therefore, it is recommended that exemptions 1,2&4 in Schedule 12A stand, and that the report and exempt appendices be discussed in exempt session and that any reporting on the meeting is prevented in accordance with Section 100A(5A)