

Pay Policy Statement – 2025/26

Chair of Committee: Cllr Theo-Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Executive Member(s): Cllr The-Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: ALL

Executive Director: Dawn Bettridge, Interim Service Director Workforce

Executive Summary

The report sets out proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement (PPS) for Somerset Council to be effective from 1 April 2025.

The amendments relate to:

- Changes to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Structure under section 2 and references throughout.
- Addition of clarify on the legal definition of Chief Officer including deputy chief officer under section 3 and inclusion of deputy chief officer under section 4.3 and 12.
- Updated reference to regulations under section 6. Pay Data.
- Updated salary/pay data following the 2024/25 pay award confirmation under section 7, 8 and 9.
- Addition of clarity relating to professional subscriptions exceptions under 10.4.

The report acknowledges that in-year amendments will be required as the 2025/26 pay awards for the Chief Executive, Chief Officers, deputy chief officers and Green Book have yet to be agreed and is therefore, not reflected in the current policy.

Recommendations

The members of the HR Committee are asked to:

- 1. Having considered Appendix A to this report and noting that it will have effect from 1 April 2025, recommend that the Chief Executive submit the Pay Policy Statement for 2025-26, to Full Council for approval.**
- 2. Note that the Pay Policy Statement will require in-year amendments to reflect the 2025/26 pay awards once agreed.**

Reasons for Proposals

To ensure that the Council complies with the statutory requirement to publish a pay policy statement annually.

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a PPS for each financial year which must be approved formally by Full Council. Pay policy statements can be amended 'in-year' should the need arise but only by Full Council.

Determination of any salary/cost of living progression for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers in the Corporate Leadership Team (formally known as the Senior Leadership Team) is undertaken by the HR Committee, subject to an annual review, as outlined in Somerset Council's Constitution.

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1. Background

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement to review the Pay Policy Statement (PPS) annually and present it to Full Council for consideration and approval. The PPS takes effect from the beginning of the financial year. The PPS will need to go before Full Council before the end of March 2025 for approval to have effect from 1 April 2025.
- 1.2 The proposed amendments to the PPS (outlined at Appendix A), relate to changes in the Corporate Leadership Structure, clarification of legal definitions, updated senior salaries information, and salary/pay data following the 2024/25 pay award confirmation, and clarification of professional subscriptions
- 1.3 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Schedule 1) and Local Government Transparency Code 2015 require local authorities to publish information about the Chief Executive and the statutory and non-statutory chief officer, which is outlined under paragraph 6 in the PPS. The updated senior salaries will be published on the Council external website. The pay and grading structure below the Corporate Leadership Team is outlined in Appendix A under appendix 1 of the PPS.
- 1.4 The PPS will require in-year amendments as the 2025/26 pay awards for the Chief Executive, Chief Officers and NJC Green Book have yet to be agreed and is therefore, not reflected in the current policy statement.

2. Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:

Appropriate pay provisions for staff are fundamental to the delivery of the Council's objectives and services.

3. Other options Considered

No alternative options were considered in relation to the review of the PPS for 2025/26, this is a statutory requirement.

4. Scrutiny comments

None.

5. Consultations undertaken

- 5.1. Proposed amendments to the PPS for 2025/26 were circulated to the recognised trade unions for information and comment on Monday 16 December 2024, with a request for final responses by end of the day on 6 January 2025. No feedback has been received.
- 5.2. Updates on the Green Book NJC national pay negotiations for 2024/25 have been discussed with the recognised Trade Unions at the Joint Negotiation Forum in Somerset. Union members were consulted throughout 2024 as to their views on the pay offer and the recognised Unions conducted a national ballot. The national negotiations for Green Book 2025/26 pay award have not been agreed yet.

6. Financial, Legal and HR Risk Implications

- 6.1. The recommendations are intended to ensure that the Pay Policy Statement maintains an appropriate balance between rigorous governance of pay and reasonable flexibility for managers to manage.
- 6.2. The amended PPS meets the requirements of the Localism Act and related statutory guidance.
- 6.3. Any financial consequences come from decisions taken by the Council in accordance with the PPS in place at the time.
- 6.4. In terms of applying the requirements of the PPS to pay / grading / appointment and dismissal of staff including termination payments, the Council will follow all statutory and collectively agreed requirements that apply to local authority employers and employees.

7. Risk Assessment

- 7.1. Failure to comply with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act could lead to a legal challenge to the Council and therefore it is important that the PPS reflects the Act, other relevant legislation and statutory guidance. The Council is required to have regard to statutory guidance and either comply with it fully or put in place appropriate alternative provisions.
- 7.2. If the Council fails to comply with the requirements of the PPS in respect of the appointment / dismissal of officers, then it could be subject to legal challenge.

8. Equalities Implications

The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have "due regard" to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions. There are no

direct equality impacts associated with agreeing the PPS itself.

9. Background paper

- 9.1. Appendix A – proposed amended Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026 (attached separately)

Report assurance checklist ahead of report publication

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Acting Monitoring Officer	Alyn Jones	06/02/2025
Legal Implications	Jill Byron	20/02/2025
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	20/02/2025
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	13/02/2025
Executive Member	Cllr Theo Butt Philip	28/02/2025