

Decision Maker: Council

Date: 13th October 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: Petition – Bromley Income Equality Group

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
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Chief Officer: Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme, if petitioners are dissatisfied with the Council's response to a petition they can request that the issue be brought before a meeting of the full Council for consideration, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold required. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes.
 - 1.2 A petition with over 500 signatures has been received from the Bromley Income Equality Group calling on the Council to create a "Fairness Commission" for Bromley, to pay its own lowest paid workers the London Living Wage and to close the pay gap amongst its own staff.
 - 1.3. The petition and the Council's initial response, provided by the Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor Graham Arthur, are set out below in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION**

Council is requested to consider the case made by the petitioners.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Petitions are dealt with according to the Council's agreed Petition Scheme.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: N/A
 4. Total current budget for this head: £N/A
 5. Source of funding: N/A
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an executive decision.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council's Petition Scheme allows for petitioners to present their case to full Council if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response to a petition, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold required of 500. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes. Once Council has considered the matter, it can choose whether or not to recommend any action. If there are any recommendations for action by Councillors or officers then a report back to the next scheduled full Council meeting is required, setting out the action that has been taken.
- 3.2 One qualifying petition, with 502 validated signatures (and a further 258 which do not meet the strict criteria of the Petition Scheme), has been received from Ms Pam Remon on behalf of the Bromley Income Equality Group. The full prayer of the petition is as follows –

**“FAIRNESS IN BROMLEY
PETITION TO BROMLEY COUNCIL AND COPY TO BORIS JOHNSON, GREATER LONDON
ASSEMBLY, MAYOR**

We call upon the Council of the London Borough of Bromley to: (a) create an independent “Fairness Commission” for Bromley (as is the case in other London Boroughs), (b) to pay its own lowest-paid workers the London Living Wage and to require its contractors to also pay the same London Living Wage to its London Borough of Bromley-contracted workers and, (c) to close the pay gap among its own staff.”

- 3.3 In line with the Council's Petition Scheme, the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Graham Arthur, responded to the petition on 27th August 2014 –

“I write in response to your recent petition. This is in effect a continuation of the same petition that I responded to last year. I wrote to you in May, July and November stating that:

- The Council's pay arrangement is the responsibility of democratically elected Councillors' acting in the best interest of Bromley tax payers/residents and Bromley staff by offering competitive pay rates. The decision-making process, save for individual salary details, is open and transparent pursuant to the Localism Act (including the supplementary guidance).
- Since adopting a localised pay arrangement, the Council's pay award in the last two years was deliberately set to favour lower graded staff. Currently there are 16 staff representing 6.80 FTE in the Council (excluding Bromley schools) earning less than the current London Living Wage.
- The current pay ratio between the Council's highest and lowest paid officers is 1:12 and is consistent with the Localism Act supplementary guidance. This is significantly below the private sector average of 1:145.

I have nothing further to add to the dialogue.

Yours sincerely
Cllr Graham Arthur
Resources Portfolio Holder”

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy/Financial/Legal/Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	None