

Harlow Council Pay Policy 2025/2026

PAY POLICY 2025/26

Introduction and Purpose

1. This Pay Policy Statement sets out the council's approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 which required English and Welsh councils to produce a Pay Policy Statement from 2012/13¹ and for each financial year thereafter and due regard to the associated Statutory Guidance including the Supplementary Statutory Guidance issued in February 2013 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.
2. Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives local authorities the power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit, the pay policy sets out how the council exercises this power.
3. The pay policy statement:
 - Must be approved formally by the Full Council.
 - Must be approved by the end of March each year.
 - May be amended during the course of the financial year.
 - Must be published on the council's website.
 - Must be complied with.
4. The statutory pay policy statement must include the council's policy on:
 - The level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer.
 - The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest-paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition).
 - The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other Officers.
 - Other specific aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency.
5. Remuneration is defined widely, to include not just pay but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in/enhancements of pension entitlements, and termination payments.

¹ Approved at Cabinet 31 January 2012

6. The council proposes to include information on other discretionary policies relating to remuneration and pensions.
7. The discretionary pay policy may include statements: -
 - a) To confirm that the JNC conditions of service for Chief Executives and Chief Officers are incorporated in those Officers' employment contracts and other related local agreements that have been included.
 - b) To confirm what any additional arrangements if any that may not amount to formal terms and conditions, but which relate to a Chief Officer's employment and which are a charge on the public purse. This may include volunteering, membership of external bodies etc.

Legislative Framework

8. Previous legislation already requires councils to publish statements relating to remuneration: -
 - a) The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 requires councils to formulate, review, and publish its policy on making discretionary payments on early termination of employment.
 - b) The Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2014 requires councils to publish its policy on increasing an employee's total pension scheme membership and on awarding additional pension.
 - c) The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996 (as amended) requires councils to publish its policy on amount and payment of injury allowances following loss of employment.
9. In determining the pay and remuneration of all its employees. The council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Employment Rights Act 1996, Employment Relations Act 1999, Equality Act 2010, Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000, Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, The Agency Workers (Amendment) Regulations 2019, and where relevant, The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, The Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 and the Employment Rights (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019, the Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023, Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act 2023, Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.
10. With regard to the equal pay requirements contained within the Equality Act, the council ensures there is no pay discrimination in its pay structures and that all pay differentials are objectively justified using an equality-proofed job evaluation mechanism, which directly relates salaries to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role. The council continues its commitment to undertake analysis of the operation of its current job evaluation process with TU support.

Objectives

11. The Authority clearly recognises the complex, challenging and competing drivers underpinning public sector remuneration, especially at the senior and subject matter specialist levels seeking to be able to recruit and retain high quality staff in a way which is externally competitive and internally fair, whilst acknowledging the financial constraints as pay and benefits are met from public funds.
12. In such a competitive recruitment 'market' remuneration levels need to enable the attraction of a suitably wide pool of talent, and the retention of suitably skilled and qualified individuals once in post. It should be recognised that the council will often be seeking to recruit in competition with other public and private sector employers.
13. The council reviews appropriate external pay market information to ensure remuneration levels are consistent with Local Government, provide value for money for the taxpayer, and support the council to remain competitive as an employer in areas of skills shortage.
14. This Pay Policy applies in a consistent way from the lowest to the highest grade. This Pay Policy Statement covers all employees.

Publication of Remuneration Packages

15. The council will continue to publish the salary ranges covering all employees on the official website for the council. Where employees have been transferred into the council under The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006/ The Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 their remuneration packages reflect their protected rates of pay.

Effect of this Policy

16. Nothing in this Pay Policy Statement enables unilateral changes to employees' terms and conditions of contract. Changes to terms and conditions of employment must follow consultation and negotiation with individuals and recognised trades unions as set out in agreements and in line with legislation.

Council's General Approach to Remuneration

17. The majority of the council's employees are covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. This covers the lowest paid, grade 3 through the council's pay scale to grade 20 and in addition covers Assistant Director pay scales.
18. Executive Directors are covered by the JNC for Chief Officers and the Managing Director by the JNC for Chief Executives.
19. Rates of pay for these groupings are reviewed annually via negotiations between the employer and trade union sides of the National Joint Council (NJC) or Joint

Negotiating Committee (JNC) following which the council's pay and grading structure is adjusted to reflect these agreements. Update as above.

Posts below Executive Directors

20. The council does not operate a system of performance related pay. All employees, including the lowest paid and Chief Officers move through their salary banding through incremental progression, subject to satisfactory performance.
21. On 22 October 2024, the National Joint Council for Local Government Services pay agreement was confirmed for 2024/2025. The pay agreement was for the greater of a flat rate payment of £1,290 or 2.50% on each scale point with effect from 1 April 2024.
22. The council remains committed to adherence with national pay bargaining in respect of the national pay spine and any annual cost of living increases negotiated. The Unions' formal pay claim to the National Joint Council (NJC) was issued January 2025. This requests a flat increase of £3,000 on all scale points and includes establishing a £15 an hour minimum wage for the sector, compared with £12.26 currently (HDC as a Living Wage Employer are on £12.60 per hour minimum wage), increasing annual leave by one day and cutting the working week by two hours.
23. The council's pay spine for 2024 commences at the higher of the Real Living Wage or national spinal column point, SCP 2, grade 3 £24,091 pa – uplifted in October 2024 due to Living Wage rate agreement to £24,307.67- and ends at local SCP 55. After real living wage it is then divided into 18 grades numbered 3 to 20, containing 3 incremental points each. The rates of pay in the pay scale are either at or above (following single status agreement) those on the NJC pay spine. The council continues with its commitment to the Real Living Wage set by the Living Wage Foundation (see paragraph 24 below).
24. Posts are allocated to a pay grade through a process of job evaluation. The council uses the NJC for Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme. The council has committed and is continuing the analysis of the operation of its current job evaluation process with TU support.
25. The lowest paid group of employees are on grade 3 (representing 1.22% of the workforce), their FTE rate of pay was £24,091, £12.48 per hour at 1 April 2024. Following the most recent announcement of October 2024 this increased the rate to £12.60 per hour which resulted in a further uplift on the bottom rate increasing the lowest annual salary to £24,307.67 per annum. All roles impacted by the change in the Living Wage Foundation rate including apprentices employed by the council received this uplift in October 2024. The council will continue to have due regard to further Living Wage Foundation changes.
26. Allowances are payable for this group, depending on the roles carried out an example being standby allowance. Some are flat rate, and others are linked

directly to salary. Allowances are updated in line with relevant pay agreement percentages each year and are reviewed periodically as agreed by Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development in consultation with the Head of Paid Service. These allowances are usually only paid for those on grades up to 20.

27. In exceptional circumstances with appropriate senior management approval the council may pay a market supplement in addition to the salary for the role where, in the absence of such a payment, it would not be possible to recruit and retain suitable employees. The value of the market supplement considers the labour market pay information for similar jobs. Any market supplements are to be reviewed by management on an annual basis and are varied or cease as necessary according to the labour market evidence for the role in question. Such a supplement is lawful under the Equality Act 2010 where there is evidence to justify that market factors are the “material reason” for the post attracting a higher rate of pay than other posts graded similarly. The council will review this policy further in 2025/26 to ensure it continues to be effective

Executive Directors (Chief Officers)

28. For the purpose of this policy statement, the council defines its most senior posts as those at Executive Director (Chief Officer) level and above.
29. In determining its grading structure and setting remuneration levels for any posts which fall outside its scope, the council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who can meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community, delivered effectively and efficiently and at times at which those services are required.
30. There are three increment salary ranges for the roles of Executive Director (Chief Officer) for which further information is available on the council’s website.
31. Periodically the council undertakes reviews to ensure that its grading and pay structure is effective and in line with the delivery of the corporate plan and market demands.
32. Other allowances are not usually paid, apart from Returning Officer remuneration (as appointed by Full Council), Deputy Returning Officer’s remuneration (to be appointed by RO) and an allowance to be paid to senior management as appropriate for any designated senior officer, for undertaking a statutory role for example the role of Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer or where extra duties result.
33. Any other such allowance is determined by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
34. The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Officers announced in July 2024 a 1 year pay agreement of 2.50% with effect from 1 April 2024. This pay agreement covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

35. The value of the scale points in the Executive Director's grade are reviewed by the Appointments Panel following a restructure or when recruiting to ensure they are aligned to market rates for the sector. Furthermore, these will be uprated by the pay awards notified from time to time by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities. As the Executive Directors were appointed by the Appointments Panel in January 2025 and the scale points were reviewed at that point, the 2024/25 pay award has not been applied, but will be for future years.
36. Information on 'Senior Management' responsibilities and remuneration will be published on the council's website in line with Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
37. Executive Directors (Chief Officers) are appointed by the Appointments panel of a minimum of three elected councillors – including the Leader and Opposition Leader and appropriate Cabinet Member as appointed by the Leader. The panel will be advised by the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development or their representative and any relevant external recruitment specialists duly appointed.
38. The Appointments panel can meet and formally designate in full or in part the recruitment for Chief Officers roles to the Managing Director or his/her appointed deputy, from interim appointment to permanent recruitment with the support of the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development or their representative alongside any relevant external recruitment specialists if duly appointed.

Managing Director

39. The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives of Local Authorities announced in October 2024 a 1 year pay agreement of 2.50% with effect from 1 April 2024. This pay agreement covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
40. The value of the scale points in the Managing Director's grade are reviewed by the Appointments Panel following a restructure or when recruiting to ensure they are aligned to market rates for the sector. Furthermore, these will be uprated by the pay awards notified from time to time by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities. As the Managing Director was appointed by the Appointments Panel in January 2025 and the scale points were reviewed at that point, the 2024/25 pay award has not been applied, but will be for future years.
41. The Managing Director in addition receives a relevant Returning Officer/Deputy Returning Officer fee in respect of District Council, County Council and Parliamentary Elections and for other national referenda or elections.
42. National advice states that a Head of Paid Service salary range should not be

more than 20 times the FTE salary range of a Band 2 ‘Green Book’ employee. It is the council’s policy that the FTE salary range for the post of Managing Director will not be greater than the nationally advised level.

Pay Multiples

	2024/25*
Ratio of the Chief Executive’s FTE salary to the median FTE salary of the council (£35,348 inclusive of Living Wage)	4.29:1
Ratio of the Chief Executive’s FTE salary to the lowest paid FTE employees (£24,307.67 at £12.60 per hour - Living Wage rate).	6.24:1

*Ratios calculated on current pay rate in January 2025 when CE position was still in post.

** The council introduced a new senior team structure led by Managing Director in February 2025

Part Time/ Full time

43. All annual salaries and annual allowances are paid pro rata to part time employees based on the hours contracted to work.

General Principles Applying to Remuneration of Chief Officers and Employees

44. On recruitment, individuals will ordinarily be placed on the lowest scale point within the pay grade for the post to which they are appointed. Appointment to a higher scale point will only be with the approval of the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development and Managing Director (Managing Director for Executive Director positions in consultation with the Leader of the Council). A relocation allowance may also be granted in certain exceptional cases aligned to HMRC requirements, when new starters need to move to the area, with the approval of the Managing Director or their nominated Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
45. The remuneration of a Chief Officer on appointment will be at a point on the relevant pay scale for the job appropriate to their experience and salary level in their previous job.
46. Individuals will normally receive an annual increment, in line with their individual terms and conditions of employment, subject to the top of their grade not being exceeded. In exceptional circumstances, individuals will receive accelerated increments with the approval of the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development subject to the top of their grade not being exceeded.
47. The council does not apply performance-related pay or bonuses.
48. The minimum point of a pay grade will not be lower than the maximum point of the preceding pay grade.

49. The Managing Director is appointed by the Appointments Panel and of a minimum of three elected councillors – including the Leader and Opposition Leader and appropriate Cabinet Member as appointed by the Leader. The panel will be advised by the Assistant Director Human Resources and Organisational Development or their representative and relevant external recruitment specialists duly appointed.

Pensions and Termination Payments

50. All employees, with a contract of employment are enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme (managed by Essex County Council). Details of contributions rates are set out below, these are set by the Administering Authority ECC. Eligible workers who have opted out of the scheme will be automatically re-enrolled providing they meet the auto enrolment criteria which occurs every three years.
51. The council has the option to adopt a number of statutory discretions under the: -
- (a) The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006.
 - (b) The Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2014.
 - (c) The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996 (as amended) (Organisational Change Policy).
52. Current policies are available on the council's website. The council commits to review and revise as necessary, the written policy statements on how it will exercise the various discretions provided by the LGPS scheme. Any discretions are subject to change, either in line with any change in regulations or by due consideration of the council under the Chief Executive. These provisions do not confer any contractual rights. The council will exercise discretion to minimise exposure to additional costs. The council does not augment additional pension membership.
53. The exception to this is the multipliers and calculation of weekly pay used for voluntary and compulsory redundancy payments this policy follows the position adopted by most council's basing the calculation on 1.5 x actual salary, thus providing up to a maximum of 45 weeks contractual pay. This scheme may be amended from time to time subject to Head of Paid Service approval.
54. The council adheres to the Governments Statutory guidance on the making and disclosure of Special Severance Payments by local authorities in England. Any case where Special Severance payments (as defined in the Statutory guidance) are made that total more than £100,000 will be reported to a meeting of the council. Payments totalling more than £100,000 which include pension fund strain and contractual severance payments (neither of which are considered to be special payments under the Statutory guidance) will also be reported to a meeting of the Council. Any such payments will be reported at the earliest opportunity.

55. Provisions in the Finance (No.2) Act 2017 changed the rules on the taxation of termination payments to remove the distinction between contractual and non-contractual payments in lieu of notice, effective from April 2018. The council continues to comply with these requirements. The council will usually expect notice period to be worked however, in exceptional circumstances the notice periods may be reduced or waived by mutual agreement, or where applicable a payment in lieu of notice may be made for all or any remaining notice period.
56. Employers are liable to pay Class 1A national insurance contributions on termination payments above £30,000 that are subject to income tax by the employee. The council is fully compliant with this requirement.
57. All employees, including chief officers, who receive a redundancy payment are subject to the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc) (Modifications) Order 1998.
58. The council's policies on Flexible Retirement, Organisational Change (subject to update at time of publication) and Redundancy Payments are available on the council's official website.

Pension Contribution bandings from April 2024

59. Following the Essex Local Government Scheme (LGPS) triennial valuation review the employer's superannuation rate of 22.3% was set as of 1 April 2023, the next review outcome from the actuary is expected in 2026 with the revised rate being implemented once confirmed. In addition, annual pay band range adjustments in line with the cost of living are also expected. At the time of publication, no further change/updates have been advised. The following employee contribution rates in accordance with actual pensionable pay continue to apply from April 2024.

Actual Pensionable Pay	Employee	50/50 Section
£0 - £17,600	5.5%	2.75%
£17,601 - £27,600	5.8%	2.9%
£27,601 - £44,900	6.5%	3.25%
£44,901 - £56,800	6.8%	3.4%
£56,801 - £79,700	8.5%	4.25%
£79,701 - £112,900	9.9%	4.95%
£112,901 - £133,100	10.5%	5.25%
£133,101 - £199,700	11.4%	5.7%
More than £199,701	12.5%	6.25%

Allowances

60. Ad hoc allowances are paid as and when a duty is carried out and will be paid monthly in arrears and determined by the relevant Assistant Director or Executive Director as appropriate.

61. Where possible, allowances will be paid as a monthly allowance, for example where staff follow a set pattern of work.
62. Professional membership fees when associated with the role being undertaken for the council are reimbursed to employees at the rate of 100% of fees incurred and only one membership per employee is reimbursed in any financial year.
63. To enhance employee wellbeing and to assist with employee retention it is necessary to consider the total rewards package available to the council's employees. The council currently offers many benefits including the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), flexi scheme (for 98 per cent of the council's employees), childcare vouchers (aligned to government requirements for access), a dedicated Harlow Council employee benefits discount scheme which provides retail discounts and includes access to a cycle to work scheme as well as an online wellbeing centre to help employees gain a better work-life balance. Counselling assistance, where deemed appropriate, is additionally provided as an extra support to individuals to assist in the management of any mental health challenges.
64. Over the past year recognition of colleagues who have provided significant service of over 50 years to the council was celebrated alongside those with 21 years' service. The council will review its recognition of service to local government further over the forthcoming year.

Publication of information relating to remuneration and review

65. The council will publish details of positions with remuneration of £50,000 or above in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Government Transparency Code issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
66. This Pay Policy Statement will be published on the council's website. If it should be necessary to amend this 2025/26 Policy during the year it applies, an appropriate resolution will be made by Full Council. Any amendments will also be published on the council's public website.
67. This statement meets the requirements of the: Localism Act 2011; the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance on "Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act" (including any supplementary Guidance issued); "The Local Government Transparency Code 2015"; and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
68. From 2018, the council is required under the Equality Act 2010 to publish information every year showing the pay gap between male and female employees. The council publishes this on its website annually.

Conclusion

69. The interpretation of the Pay Policy is to be made by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council.