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Human Resources and Council Tax
Committee

24 February 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE, HELD ON MONDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.30 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY

Present:	Councillors Chapman (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), Chittock, Clifton, Fowler, S Honeywood (except Minutes 22 (part) - 24) and M Stephenson
Also Present:	Councillors Amos, P Honeywood (Portfolio Holder for Housing) (except Minutes 22 (part) - 24) and McWilliams (Portfolio Holder for Partnerships)
In Attendance:	Anastasia Simpson (Head of People, Performance and Projects), Carol Magnus (Organisational Development Manager), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager), Richard Bull (Corporate Finance Manager & Deputy Section 151 Officer), Pauline Lifton (HR and Business Advisor) and Katie Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Morrison (with Councillor Fowler substituting), Broderick and Calver (with no substitutes).

14. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee, held on 23 October 2019, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The Council's Head of People, Performance and Projects (Anastasia Simpson) updated the Committee in regards to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures item that had been considered at its last meeting (minute 8 referred). The Committee was informed that their request to investigate the appropriateness and practicalities of introducing Disclosure and Barring checks for all Members of Tendring District Council had been looked into by the Standards Committee and it had been decided that the current procedure of not carrying out checks should be maintained. However, if a Councillor should wish to have a Disclosure and Barring check, the costs involved would be covered by the Council. The Committee was also made aware that E-training would be provided for Members in regards to the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Griffiths declared that he was a member of the GMB Union.

16. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

There were none on this occasion.

17. SENIOR RESTRUCTURING - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the Council's Organisational Development Manager (Carol Magnus) in regards to the processes and timetable for the Senior Restructuring process, following the retirement of the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Committee was informed that a review of the Senior Management structure had been carried out by the Chief Executive (Ian Davidson) and that a formal consultation had taken place. All Heads of Service and Directors had been fully involved in this process and their input into the consultation process had been extremely valuable. The Chief Executive had taken on board their suggestions and as a result had adjusted the Senior Management Structure based on some of the feedback received.

The Committee was further informed that the final agreed structure brought to life the Chief Executive's intention to create a more flexible, integrated and fit for purpose Senior Management Team, whilst also ensuring that there was an appropriate balance between the following areas of priority for the management of the Council:

- Corporate focus and sound governance and finances;
- Community Leadership and Partnership working;
- Effective service delivery;
- Growth, strategic planning and place shaping;
- Garden Communities and Corporate Projects; and
- Improved matrix management across the organisation.

The Organisational Development Manager explained to the Committee that those changes would help ensure maximum efficiency was achieved, and that resources were deployed in the most effective manner to continue to provide an affordable and successful range of services for the District and its residents.

The Organisational Development Manager further explained to the Committee that the approach that was being taken recognised the strength of managerial talent within the Council and was consistent with the Council's "grow your own" philosophy.

The Committee was informed that the final structure had two Corporate Directors and 7 Assistant Directors. Three of those posts (Assistant Director of Governance, Assistant Director of Finance and IT, and Assistant Director of Partnerships) would be part of the Management Team together with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Directors.

The Committee was further informed that the next stage in implementing the new Senior Management Structure, was to appoint the Assistant Director posts and that there had been a strong field of applications for the Assistant Director posts from amongst the Heads of Service. Those Heads of Service who had chosen to remain in their existing roles would play a crucial part in supporting their new Assistant Directors in delivering the function of their directorate.

It was explained to the Committee that, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, all shortlisted candidates would be interviewed by a panel including the Chief Executive, an independent HR Advisor (*Marcia Fuller*), three Elected Members and where applicable, the Corporate Director (Operational Services) Paul Price or the Corporate Director

(Planning and Regeneration Services) Ewan Green. The first interviews had been held and the remaining interviews would take place on 3 and 4 March.

The format for the selection process was as follows:

- All candidates to complete an online Psychometric Test, which in the interest of fairness, had been administered and assessed externally by EELGA.
- A formal Interview.

All candidates would be expected to provide a ten minute presentation, focusing on their changing role from Head of Service to Assistant Director and their vision for their service(s) moving forward. The interview questions would be based on the Universal Competency Framework which they would all be familiar with.

The appointments would be effective from 1 April 2020, which was the implementation date of the new Senior Management Structure. There would also be an away day for the new Assistant Directors with input from the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors in early April to start to embed this new structure.

The Committee noted the foregoing.

18. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, REVENUES AND BENEFITS & SECTION 151 OFFICER - A.1 - FORMAL CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL TAX AMOUNTS FOR 2020/21 FOLLOWING THE NOTIFICATION OF THE PRECEPTS FROM THE MAJOR PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES**

Members were reminded of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which provided that any Member, who was in arrears by at least two months with their Council Tax payments, could not vote on matters concerning either the level of, or administration of, Council Tax. It was important to note that this also covered Council Tax liabilities outside of the District and property which might not be their main residence. If present at the meeting, a Member to whom this provision applied must disclose the fact and could speak on the item, but could not vote. Non-compliance with this section was a criminal offence. Therefore, should this provision apply to any Member, this should be disclosed.

The Committee's confirmation was sought in respect of the final Council Tax amounts for 2020/21 including the precepts issued for 2020/21 by Essex County Council and the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Council's Corporate Finance Manager and Deputy Section 151 Officer (Richard Bull) was in attendance and informed Members that, once the precepts had been received from the major precepting authorities, the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee had the delegated responsibility to agree the total Council Tax for 2020/21. The total Council Tax for the year was made up of the District and Parish / Town Council amounts approved by this Council and the corresponding amounts agreed by the major precepting authorities. Legislation required this formal confirmation even though the process was dictated by legislative formulae and there was no actual judgement or choice to be made.

The Committee was aware that the District and Parish/Town Council precepts for 2020/21 had been approved at the meeting of the Council held on 11 February 2020 and were set out in Appendix B to the report. Since that date the precepts from the major precepting authorities for 2020/21 had been received. The table set out below showed the precepts issued for 2020/21 for Essex County Council, Essex Police services and Essex Fire services:-

Precepting Authority	Council Tax Amount (Band D equivalent)	Increase
Essex County Council	£1,321.11	3.99%
Essex Fire Services	£73.89	1.99%
Essex Police Services	£198.63	2.94%

It was reported that, when added to the amounts relating to the District and Parish / Town Council Services, as approved by Council on 11 February 2020, the average Band D Tax totalled £1,808.54 for 2020/21. Appendix A to the report set out the full precept details and Appendix C set out for confirmation the 2020/21 Council Tax amounts including the precepts from the major precepting authorities by property band for the unparished and parished areas of the District.

It was moved by Councillor S A Honeywood, seconded by Councillor Chittock and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that -

- (a) the precepts issued by Essex County Council, Essex Police and Essex Fire for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (b) the amounts of Council Tax for 2020/21 for each of the categories of dwellings, as shown in Appendix C to the report, be confirmed.

19. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTS - A.2 - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

There was submitted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Projects (A.2) on the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021.

The Committee was reminded that Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement and that those matters which were required to be included in the statutory Pay Policy Statement were as follows:

- A local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer;
- A local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest-paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- A local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other Officers; and

- A local authority's policy on other aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance related pay and bonuses, termination payments and transparency.

It was reported that the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 had been designed to give an overview of the Council's framework regarding pay and rewards for staff within the Council. The framework was based on the principle of fairness and that rewards should be proportional to the weight of each role and each individual's performance. The framework aimed to ensure the ability of the Council to recruit talented individuals whilst reassuring the citizens of Tendring that their money was being used efficiently.

It was further reported that a major pay assimilation exercise had been carried out by the Council in 2018/19, in order to move across to the new nationally agreed pay bands for 2019/20, which had resulted in multiple inflationary variations across the pay scale. Changes had included:-

New Pay Spine 1 April 2019

- A bottom rate of £9.00 per hour (£17,364) on new Spinal Column Point (SCP) 1 (equivalent to old SCP's 6 & 7).
- 'Pairing off' old SCP's 6-17 incl. to create new SCP's 1-6 inclusive.
- Equal steps of 2.0% between each new SCP's 1 to 22 inclusive (equivalent to old SCP's 6-28 inclusive.)
- By creating equal steps between those pay points, new SCP's 10, 13, 16, 18 and 21 were generated to which no old SCP's would assimilate.
- On new SCP's 23 and above (equivalent to old SCP's 29 and above), 2.0% increase on 2018 rate.

The Head of People, Performance and Projects provided an overview to the Committee on some key changes.

Members raised questions which were responded to by Officers.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that this Committee comments to Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21, as set out at Appendix A, should be adopted.

20. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTS - A.3 - EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND HEALTH & WELL-BEING UPDATE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Projects (A.3) presented by the HR and Business Manager (Katie Wilkins), which provided the Committee with an update on the Council's current activities that related to Employee Engagement and Health and Wellbeing.

The Council's Partnerships Portfolio Holder (Councillor McWilliams) was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

It was reported that there was much evidence to suggest that an 'engaged' workforce described employees who were healthier, happier, more fulfilled or more motivated. Employee engagement was the extent to which employees felt passionate about their

jobs, were committed to the organisation in which they worked and put discretionary effort into their work (CIPD, 2019).

It was further reported that research had revealed that high levels of engagement were clearly linked with higher levels of performance, customer satisfaction, productivity, innovation, staff retention and efficiency.

Members were informed that the Council had regularly undertaken an independent and confidential staff survey, which was partly funded by the Local Government Association to establish current levels of employee engagement. The last reported findings from the survey compiled by Dr Martin Reddington, had demonstrated the following:-

- From an employee perspective, Tendring District Council continued to have a committed workforce, investing time, energies and concentration to get the job done well, and feeling a sense of pride in doing so.
- Reported levels of organisational engagement had increased – this was the sense of loyalty and advocacy that employees felt towards the Council.
- The Council had relied on good will and high levels of motivation and performance from staff, in terms of ‘going the extra mile’ and ‘engagement’ with organisational objectives and values.
- The perception of Tendring District Council as an ‘employer’ continued to improve.

This had been further evidenced from the staff survey which had been conducted as a part of the Investors in People (IiP) Gold Assessment in January 2019. The final Assessment Report had stated:-

“It was apparent from the assessment TDC employees, many of whom are long serving, think TDC is a great place to work.

They have embraced the Investors in People principles and continue to strive for further improvement. This will continue to be achieved by maintaining a culture of openness and trust where staff are regularly asked for opinions, ideas and suggestions for improvement.”

To gain further insight into how staff felt about working for the Council, a TEDD Lite Survey would be undertaken, again managed by Martin Reddington Associates, during February/March 2020.

Members were further informed that the results would help Officers assess progress during 2020/21 and identify and prioritise actions where more improvements could be made. The focus of the survey would be to establish:-

- What was good about working for the Council?
- What was not so good? What could still be improved?
- What made an employee go the extra mile at work?
- What got in the way of them doing a good job?

Understanding the importance of an engaged workforce, and the reported link between this and the health and wellbeing of its employees, the Council was committed to a proactive approach towards workplace health and wellbeing. Good health and wellbeing could be a core enabler of employee engagement and organisational performance (CIPD, 2019).

Research had suggested that adopting a positive culture around employee engagement and wellbeing was likely to contribute to reduced turnover of staff, reduced levels of sickness absence/presenteeism and encouraged the Council to be 'an employer of choice.'

Members raised questions which were responded to by Officers and there was some discussion in regards to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which was available to Officers and Members.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) the Committee recognise and acknowledge the hard work of the Human Resources team and thanks them for their efforts in regards to Employee Engagement and Health and Wellbeing; and
- (c) there should be more engagement with Members about the help that is available to them in regards to Health and Wellbeing.

21. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTS - A.4 - STAFFING STATISTICS

There was submitted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Projects (A.4) presented by HR and Business Manager (Katie Wilkins), which provided the Committee with updated and current staffing statistics including:

- (1) Number of Staff Employed – Full-Time and Part-Time;
- (2) Gender Profile;
- (3) Age Profile;
- (4) Disability Profile;
- (5) Ethnicity Profile; and
- (6) Sickness Absence (information was included on the management procedures and preventative action taken together with the sources of support available for staff).

Officers responded to questions raised by Members on various topics.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

22. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND PROJECTS - A.5 - THE PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT (LEAVE AND PAY) ACT 2018

There was submitted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Projects (A.5) presented by HR and Business Manager (Katie Wilkins), which provided the Committee with information on the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018.

The Council's HR and Business Advisor (Pauline Lifton) attended the meeting for this item as she had worked with the Head of People, Performance and Projects in preparing the report.

The Committee was informed that, as from 6 April 2020, Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave (SPBL) would be available to all employees who were 'bereaved parents' (which meant that they were the primary carer for a child who had died under the age of 18). Two weeks statutory leave would be available for all employees from day one (there was no minimum service needed).

The Committee was further informed that Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) would be available to employees with 26 weeks continuous employment with their employer (at the week before the week in which the child had died; as long as they were still employed by the employer on the day on which their child died) and where their normal weekly earnings in the eight weeks up to the week before the child's death were not less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions purposes.

It was reported that the entitlement would also be available to adults with parental responsibilities for children, who were not their birth parents, i.e. for adoptive parents, those who were fostering to adopt, legal guardians and most foster parents (except those in short-term fostering arrangements). It also applied to parents who had suffered a stillbirth 24 weeks or more into pregnancy. Where more than one child died, the parent would have a statutory entitlement to leave and pay in respect of each child.

It was further reported that the leave must be taken in units of one week, so it could be taken as a single block of two weeks, or two separate blocks of one week at different times. The leave could be taken at any time up to 56 weeks from the date of the death of the child. Bereavement leave could be taken straight away after the death of the child. If this leave was not taken straight away, then employees would be required to give one weeks' notice to their employer that they would be taking this leave.

Members raised questions which were responded to by Officers.

Following discussion, it was moved by Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor M E Stephenson and **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted as a statutory requirement;
- (b) the People, Performance and Projects Team be requested to update internal policies and procedures to include this statutory entitlement;
- (c) the Committee requested for Officers to provide information on the Council's Case Management processes in regards to parental bereavement and the various Policies in place that would be used to help and support those in such circumstances; and
- (d) two weeks full pay in such circumstances should be adopted.

23. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of Agenda Item 12 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

24. EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2019

The exempt minute of the meeting of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee held on 23 October 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman

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