

Public Document Pack

Human Resources and Council Tax
Committee

23 February 2023

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX
COMMITTEE,
HELD ON THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 2023 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chapman BEM (Chairman), Griffiths (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Baker, Calver, S A Honeywood and Morrison
Also Present:	Councillor P B Honeywood
In Attendance:	Carol Magnus (Organisational Development Manager), Richard Bull (Corporate Finance Manager & Deputy Section 151 Officer)(except items 27 - 31), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager), Jo Williams-Lota (Senior Human Resources Advisor), Debiannne Messenger (Work Based Learning Manager) and Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer)

21. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman was delighted to inform the Committee that the Council's Human Resources Team had been nominated for a Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA) Service Superstars Team Award. The awards ceremony would be held at the PPMA's national conference in April 2023.

Members marked this achievement with a round of applause.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies for absence submitted or substitutes appointed on this occasion.

23. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Amos and:-

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Tuesday 11 October 2022, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Griffiths stated for the public record that he was a member of the GMB union and a Shop steward but that he had no involvement with Tendring District Council in that capacity.

25. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted on this occasion.

26. **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FINANCE & IT) - A.1 - FORMAL CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL TAX AMOUNTS FOR 2023/24 FOLLOWING THE NOTIFICATION OF THE PRECEPTS FROM THE MAJOR PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES**

The Committee had before it a report of the Assistant Director (Finance & IT) (report A.1) which set out and sought its confirmation of the final Council Tax amounts for 2023/24 including the precepts issued for 2023/24 by Essex County Council and the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner for Essex.

Members were aware that, at its meeting held on 14 February 2023, Full Council had considered the Executive's Budget and Council Tax proposals for 2023/24 and, as part of that process, the Council Tax for District and Parish / Town Council Services had been approved at that meeting.

Members were also aware that, once the precepts were received from the major precepting authorities, the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee had the delegated responsibility to agree the total Council Tax for 2023/24. The total Council Tax for the year was made up of the District and Parish / Town Council amounts 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 precepts from the major precepting authorities for 2023/24 had resulted in the final Council Tax amounts, as set out in Appendix C to the aforementioned report, for formal confirmation by the Committee.

In order to confirm the Council Tax amounts for 2023/24 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Griffiths and:-

RESOLVED that -

- (a) the precepts issued by Essex County Council, Essex Police and Essex Fire, as set out in Appendix A to item A.1 of the Report of the Assistant Director (Finance & IT), be noted; and
- (b) the amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings, as shown at Appendix C to the aforesaid report, be confirmed.

27. **CAREER TRACK AND APPRENTICESHIPS - ORAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Work Based Learning Manager (Debianne Messenger) updating it on the work of the Council's Career Track and Apprenticeship provision section.

The presentation covered the following matters:-

- (i) Background to Career Track Apprenticeships provision;
- (ii) OfSTED Framework;
- (iii) Response to OfSTED Inspection in 2021;

-
- (iv) OfSTED monitoring visit in 2022: Purpose of their visit; Questions asked of TDC; Outcome including positive acknowledgement of the Direction of Travel;
 - (v) Next Steps: Self-Assessment Report; Quality Improvement Plan; Governance Meetings on areas of focus; preparation for OfSTED Full Inspection;
 - (vi) National Apprenticeship Week - February 2023: \$0 years of Career Track at TDC; celebration of individuals' success.

The Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

28. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.2 - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024

The Committee gave consideration to a report of the Assistant Director (Partnerships) (A.2) which presented the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24.

Members were aware that the Localism Act 2011 Section 38 (1) required the Council to prepare a Pay Policy Statement each year. The Pay Policy Statement had to articulate the Council's approach to a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or 'Chief Officers') and its lowest paid employees.

The matters that had 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.*
- *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.*

The Committee was informed that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 had been designed to give an overview of the Council's framework regarding pay and rewards for staff within the Council. This 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 also aimed to ensure the ability of the Council to recruit talented individuals whilst ensuring value for money for the residents of Tendring.

The Conditions of Employment with Tendring District Council, including pay, in the main, conformed to those established for local government generally by the National Joint Committee (NJC). Agreements reached by the NJC were 'collective agreements'.

The Committee recalled that the Council had worked with the East of England Local Government Association in 2022 to carry out an independent review of the Council's pay structure. This had led to some options to support best use of the NJC pay spine in alignment with the employment market. Those had included salary and benefits benchmarking, improved marketing of vacancies and employment offer and expanding

the Council's well established "grow your own" ethos. Those options were currently being considered as part of the Assistant Director level change programme.

Members were made aware that there was limited change reported in the 2023/24 Statement with the exception of the application of the agreed 2022/23 pay award. There were particularly significant changes at the bottom end of the pay spine following agreement between the national Employers and national Unions of an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above (*a percentage increase of between 10.5% and 4.04% across the pay spine*).

Furthermore, as part of the 2022/23 pay award, the NJC had agreed that, from 1 April 2023, Spinal Column Point (SCP) 1 would be permanently deleted from the NJC pay spine. Therefore, any employees currently placed on SCP 1 would be assimilated across to SCP 2 from that date.

It was re-iterated that, In determining the pay and remuneration of all of its employees, the Council would comply with all relevant employment legislation.

The Council ensured its pay structures and all pay differentials could be objectively justified through the use of the NJC job evaluation mechanism (*with the exception of Chief Officer remuneration*) which directly determined the relative levels of posts in grades according to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.

Members were aware that, since 2018, the Council had been required to publish mandatory gender pay gap reporting in order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (*Specific Duties and Public Authorities*) Regulations 2017.

Data for the 2023/24 reporting period showed the following:-

- *At an organisational level, male and female employees represented 43% and 57% respectively.*
- *Each reporting quartile was broadly representative of the overall staff ratio for the organisation, within a tolerance of 3%.*
- *There was no material disparity at each pay level within the organisation, when viewed within the context of the UK average (ONS October 2021).*

The Committee was advised that the Council's pay gap would continue to be subject to review and that, if any substantial gaps were identified as the Council interpreted its data, a suitable action plan would be prepared.

The Committee also noted that work was underway to update the Council's Allowances Policy, specifically around out of hours' responses to emergency incidents.

Members were reminded that Schedule 2 of Part 3 of the Constitution delegated to Full Council the preparation and approval of a Pay Policy Statement for the upcoming financial year in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011.

Supplementary provisions within that Act relating to Statements included that -

-
- “(1) A relevant authority’s Pay Policy Statement must be approved by a resolution of the authority before it comes into force.*
- (2) Each Statement must be prepared and approved before the end of the 31 March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates.*
- (3) A relevant authority may by resolution amend its Pay Policy Statement (including after the beginning of the financial year to which it relates).*
- (4) As soon as is reasonably practicable after approving or amending a Pay Policy Statement, the authority must publish the Statement or the amended Statement in such manner as it thinks fit (which must include publication on the authority’s website).”*

In order to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (Section 38 (1)):-

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

RESOLVED that this Committee recommends to Full Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24, as set out in Appendix A to item A.2 of the Report of the Assistant Director (Partnerships), be adopted.

29. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.3 - VOLUNTEER POLICIES

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director (Partnerships) (A.3) which introduced to it a suite of proposed policies to support the volunteering activities within the Council namely, a Volunteer Policy and an Employee Volunteering and Public Duties Policy, which, if agreed, would be implemented by the Council.

Members were informed that the purpose of introducing a suite of Volunteer Policies was to outline the Council’s commitment to encouraging members of the local community to undertake voluntary roles within the Council and to support existing employees who wished to undertake voluntary work within the local community, or for charitable institutions.

The Council recognised that by encouraging and supporting volunteers, it was able to increase the services it offered, help build relationships with the local community, develop employees/ volunteers and improve how the Council was perceived within the local community.

It was felt Employees who volunteered could share the skills that they had developed at work to help the community and also learn new skills through volunteering. This might include, for example, leadership qualities and improved morale, physical health and work-life balance.

The Policies outlined:-

- the Council’s commitment to volunteering, volunteers and employees who volunteered in our local community;
- the recruitment, induction and management of volunteers;

-
- conflict of interest considerations where existing staff requested to volunteer for external bodies in the local community;
 - guidance on time off or changing working hours for existing staff who wished to volunteer; and
 - key policies and procedures that needed to be considered when supporting volunteers.

Unison had been consulted on the full suite of Volunteer Policies and had offered agreement and support for their implementation.

Furthermore, consultation on the Volunteer Policy had taken place with Payroll (*for insurance purposes*), Public Realm (as a significant host of volunteers) and Health & Safety colleagues (*for Risk Assessment purposes*). All of whom had offered agreement and support of its implementation.

During the discussion of this item, members of the Committee raised points of issue on the following matters:-

Volunteer Policy

- (a) Section 3 (Status of Volunteers) – implication that Ward Members would not be able to use any involvement for political promotion;
- (b) Section 6.4 (Problem Solving and Complaints) – suggestion that an amendment be made in order to allow a Volunteer to have the facility to involve a third party in support in making/defending a complaint;
- (c) Section 7 (Volunteers who are under 18 years old) – suggestion that an amendment be made to strengthen requirement for DBS checks; and
- (d) Appendix F (Volunteer Induction Checklist) – Include issues around various forms of Insurance as part of the induction process.

Employee Volunteering and Public Duties Policy

- (e) Section 5.4 (Special Constables) – Expand this section to also include Retained Firemen.

Having duly considered the Council's statutory obligations with regard to the engagement of volunteers, and employees who undertook voluntary public duties:-

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Amos and:-

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the Volunteer Policy (January 2023) and the Employee Volunteer and Public Duties Policy (January 2023), as set out in Appendices A and B respectively to item A.3 of the Report of the Assistant Director (Partnerships), be adopted, subject to the Officers taking on board the issues raised by Members at the meeting (as detailed above) and making the appropriate amendments to the Policies, as required; and
- (b) the Policies, as amended, be circulated to all members of the Committee for their further comments which comments will be taken into account by the Assistant Director (Partnerships) in finalising, adopting and publishing the Policies.

30. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 10 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

31. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

RESOLVED that the Exempt Minute of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Tuesday 11 October 2022, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.12 pm

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank