

Thurrock: An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

## General Services Committee

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **7 February 2023**

**Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL**

### Membership:

Councillors Mark Coxshall (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Vice-Chair), Barry Johnson, John Kent, Fraser Massey, James Thandi and Lynn Worrall

### Substitutes:

Councillors Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Shane Hebb, Andrew Jefferies, Kairen Raper and Luke Spillman

### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>
To approve as a correct record the minutes of General Services Committee meeting held on 16 January 2023.	
<b>3 Items of Urgent Business</b>	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
<b>4 Declarations of Interests</b>	
<b>5 Representations to Government Directions issued in January 2023 - to follow</b>	

## Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members are asked to consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **6 Employment Matter - to follow**

#### **Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **30 January 2023**

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### **Access to Information and Meetings**

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The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities. If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment, please contact the Communications Team at [CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk) before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted, and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

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- You should connect to TBC-GUEST
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

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## How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
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# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

## Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

## When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

**What is a Non-Pecuniary interest?** – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

### Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

### Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
  - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
  - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
  - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
  
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
  - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
  - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
  - Fewer public buildings with better services
  
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
  - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
  - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
  - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

## Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 16 January 2023 at 6.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Mark Coxshall (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Vice-Chair), Barry Johnson, John Kent, Fraser Massey, James Thandi and Lynn Worrall

**In attendance:** Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation  
John Jones, Director Law & Governance, and Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

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### **40. Minutes**

The minutes of the General Services Committee meeting on 4 January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

### **41. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **42. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **43. Pay Policy - report to follow**

The Director of HR, OD and Transformation introduced the report stating that the recommendations sought a decision from the committee on amending the pay policy (which was agreed in February 2022) mid-year following the finalisation of the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award. Thurrock's negotiations with trades unions over the current pay policy had been complex but were agreed. The NJC Award had been finalised in November 2022 and trades unions at Thurrock had formally requested its implementation. Officers highlighted that in the context of the recently announced Section 114 notice this additional spend, if the amendment was agreed, would put further financial pressure on providing a balanced budget. It was highlighted that the amended increase did not apply to senior management pay scales.

The Committee had three options:

1. To implement the amendment and back date it to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
2. To defer the amendment.
3. To partially implement the amendment.

Cllr Coxshall was of a view that deferment was not an option and staff were not to blame for the current financial situation the Council found itself in. Cllr Kent agreed that neither deferment or partial implementation were appropriate and staff had been waiting a long time. Cllr Arnold felt implementation was the morally right choice and deferment would simply kick the issue down the road.

Cllr Massey said he thought a partial implementation might be possible but in his opinion would not be fair to staff and agreed with the views of other Members.

Officers highlighted that deferring the issue would create complex negotiations in the future and a partial implementation would require further negotiations with unions on clauses within the current procedure and rules, which in themselves would be complex and may not be successful.

Following a question from the Chair officers confirmed that the Council was not late in implementing this amendment. The NJC award had only been finalised in November and although some councils had implemented the amendment in December 2022, considering Thurrock's current situation, a January implementation was reasonable. This was the first time Thurrock's pay policy, which was collectively agreed with unions, had been significantly different to the NJC award figure.

Members discussed the third recommendation of the report and Cllr Kent noted that the Committee was not being specifically asked to agree a review of pay and staffing costs. Officers explained that Commissioners expected the Council to review all areas of spend in light of the budget deficit, which included staff costs. The Council had already reviewed and implemented new pay scales in 2019 and expenses had been reviewed a couple of years ago too. Members did not want to endorse any review or its findings without first knowing the detail. Members and officers agreed that a detailed terms of reference for any review would be brought back to the committee for consideration. Members acknowledged that a review may be required under the terms of the intervention.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- 1. The Committee agree option 1, to implement the in year amendments to the pay policy.**
- 2. The Committee recommend to Council to revise the 2022/23 Pay Policy Statement.**
- 3. The Committee note that the commissioner recommends a full review of pay arrangements is carried out before any future agreements are made; this needs to include a review of policies for increments and all other pay allowances to ensure all opportunities for mitigating the pay growth are considered.**



**The meeting finished at 6.37 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

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