

PUBLIC Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 27 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), John Kent (Vice-Chair), Deborah Arnold, Kairen Raper, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman and Lynn Worrall

In attendance: Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director
Commissioner
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Tina Dempsey, Strategic Lead – HR, OD & Transformation
Sarah Lamont, Bevan Brittan LLP
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the General Services Committee held on the 7 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

3. Declarations of Interests

No interests were declared.

4. Terms of Reference

Members noted the terms of reference.

5. Employment Matter

At 7.02pm the meeting went into exempt session.

At 7.08pm the meeting resumed into public session.

6. Pay Policy 2023/24 - Senior Manager Pay

The report presented set out the position regarding pay for Senior Managers, with pay for senior managers being governed by the 'Pay Strategy and Pay Policy' which was implemented in 2010, an annual review was conducted

each year to determine pay awards. The policy applied to Assistant Directors, Directors and the Chief Executive.

The following points were made:

1. Member noted any reward could be seen as a reward for organisation failure.
2. Point made that the increase should be 0% and did not know of any senior manager or any Member who could make a strong, coherent argument for a pay increase in this authority.
3. Point made that every penny not spent on senior management pay could be spent on other services or increase the wages of staff who had no influence on the failings that have been laid out in the Best Value Inspection report.
4. Concern was raised and considered on the wider issue of pay and the signal that it would send if an increase was agreed.
5. Point made that those senior officers still working for the council were working long hours and putting in a huge amount of work to turn the authority around and back into a fit position to make it a successful authority. There were special circumstances that pay increases were recognised.
6. Members discussed an alternative option of either a 3% or 2% increase.
7. Members agreed this was the time to reshape Thurrock with a new director's board structure being announced, the council had to attract more people into Thurrock by offering a good pay structure. This offer had to be the right balance to attract into the council and to reward those who may be looking to work elsewhere.
8. Members acknowledged the long hours that some officers were working and those that had stepped up into other roles.
9. Point made that it was important that front line staff were properly rewarded.
10. Point made that by a show of leadership, for most senior people an increase was not the responsible or appropriate thing to do this year.
11. Councillor J Kent moved and seconded by Councillor Spillman that option (D) be recommended.

RESOLVED

1. **Considered the legislative and policy background to the annual senior managers pay review (section 2).**
2. **Considered the outcome of the annual review and benchmarking (section 3.1).**
3. **Considered context in which this year's review is taking place (section 3.2).**

4. **Considered benefits, risks and legal implications for options presented (section 3.3).**
5. **Determined option (D) offer of no increase as a preferred option to recommend for inclusion in the revised annual Pay Policy statement for approval at Council in July 2023.**
6. **Noted the commitment to undertake a wider review of pay and reward in the Council, including senior manager pay and arrangements for determining on-going annual pay settlements.**

7. Pay and Reward Review

The report informed Members that Council issued a S114 and all measures to reduce spend or avoid cost need to be pursued. The employee budget represented the largest spend within the council. Additional pressure on the employee budget arose as a result of the higher-than-expected NJC award in 2022/23 and the Council would be facing the same situation in 2023/24. In order to mitigate the pressure a review of pay was agreed by Council in January 2023, an initial scoping exercise had been undertaken to identify workforce expenditure that can potentially provide savings opportunities. More detailed analysis would need to take place over the next few months with comprehensive recommendations to further reduce our workforce expenditure. The opportunities identified had been assessed to show the current level of expenditure, the type of organisation change required to achieve a reduction along with associated benefits, risks, and timescales for delivery.

The following points were made:

1. Members were informed that the scope of the discretionary payment was quite limited, with some discretion in policies such as to prolong the payment of sick pay under certain circumstances or pilon paid on occasions for ill health retirement.
2. Point made that an officer may receive a discretionary payment for example for an injury and the recovery would bring that officer back to work within an extension of a period of time would seem cruel.
3. Members agreed there was insufficient information in regard to the immediate cessation of all discretionary payments for them to decide.

Action – Clarity on the cessation of all discretionary payments to be brought back to committee in report format, date to be confirmed with Democratic Services. **Jackie Hinchliffe**

RESOLVED

1. Agreed the scope and timescale of the pay and reward review as recommended in the 2023/24 Pay Policy.

2. Disagreed the immediate cessation of all discretionary payments to reduce avoidable costs until further information was available to the General Services Committee members in a completed format to which members would consider.
3. Agreed the review of Performance Management council wide.

The Public recording of this meeting can be found from the following link:

[General Services Committee - Tuesday 27 June 2023, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 7.30 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**