

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 **7.00 pm** on **24 August 2023**

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

### Membership:

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

### Substitutes:

Councillors Paul Arnold, George Coxshall, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Valerie Morris-Cook, Sara Muldowney and Lee Watson

### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2 Minutes</b>	<b>5 - 12</b>
To approve as a correct record the minutes of General Services Committee meeting held on 27 June 2023 and 5 July 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 Employment Matter - Senior Management Arrangements - to follow</b>	
<b>6 Pay Policy 2023/24 - Senior Manager Pay - 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.

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|----------|---|----------------|
| <b>7</b> | <b>Exempt Minutes of General Services Committee Meetings held on the 27 June 2023 and 5 July 2023</b> | <b>13 - 22</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Employment Matter - Finance Department Restructure - to follow</b>                                 |                |

### **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: **16 August 2023**

## **Information for members of the public and councillors**

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

#### **Advice Regarding Public Attendance at 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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The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

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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
- Enter your username and password

# 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

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

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**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

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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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

## **PUBLIC Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee held on 5 July 2023 at 7.00 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold, Kairen Raper, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Sara Muldowney (Substitute) (substitute for Lynn Worrall) and Lee Watson (Substitute) (substitute for John Kent) (*arrived at 7.03pm*)

**Apologies:** Councillors John Kent and Lynn Worrall

**In attendance:** Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director  
Commissioner  
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Elizabeth Roy, Senior HR Business Partner  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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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.

### **8. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

### **9. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **10. Constitution Review Process**

The report presented set out the proposed way forward with regards to reviewing the Constitution, setting out a new internal review process in line with Improvement and Recovery Plan requirements.

The following points were highlighted:

- A work plan would be created that both the Member and Officer Constitution Working Groups would agree on.
- To add to the Member Constitution Group terms of reference, the minimum requirement to meet quarterly throughout the year.
- Review would take place and would require collaborative input from members, officers and external bodies.
- It was recognised the Constitution Working Group had previously undertaken good work.

- The Best Value Inspection had highlighted the expectation to corporately review the constitution.
- Members welcomed continuity between the working groups via the Monitoring Officer and the Strategic Head of Democratic, Scrutiny and Member Services sitting on both groups.
- It was agreed the current constitution required a comprehensive update as identified from the Best Value Inspection.
- One difference in approach would be that officers would be asked how they could use the constitution more effectively for their daily duties via their working group.
- There would be dialogue and a collaborative effort between both groups and external bodies who would provide best practice advice.
- Costs incurred relating to LGA and CfGS support would come from a budget agreed with the LGA with no costs directed to Thurrock Council. This had been agreed at the Recovery Governance Board and presented to the Improvement Recovery Board.

The Committee agreed the following amendments to the documentation going forward:

1. Add a box into the flow chart to refer to the Governance Recovery Board before the Officer Constitution Working Group.
1. Amend the Members Constitution Working Group terms of reference to include the requirement to meet quarterly.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. **That the committee endorse the process for the forthcoming review of the constitution, including the involvement of external organisations for aspects of the constitution.**
2. **That the two amendments relating to the flowchart and terms of reference for the Member Constitution Working Group, as detailed above, be incorporated into the final documents.**

#### **11. Employment Matter - Senior Management Arrangements**

*At 7.13pm, the meeting went into exempt session.*

**The meeting finished at 8.01 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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