

Minutes of: **CORPORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 8 February 2023

Present: Councillor T Rafiq (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, D Green, M Hayes,
J Lancaster, E Moss, E O'Brien, A Quinn and R Gold

Trade Union attendance: S Allen, E Entwistle, P Hewitt, K Mather, C Jakeway, and J Thomson

Also in Attendance: S Bagley, D Ball, W Blandamer, P Braithwaite, S Evans, P Lakin, S McVaigh, L Ridsdale, and C Schofield

Apologies for Absence: T Beesley, G Little, J Richards and J Dennis.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Tony Beesley, Geoff Little, Jeanette Richards and Jacqui Dennis.

32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the last meeting held 30 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

34 THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

Councillor Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities, presented the report which outlined the forecast financial position of the Council at the end of 2022/23 based on the information known at the end of the third quarter, 31st December 2022. The report set out the position for both revenue and capital and provides an analysis of the variances, both under and overspending.

In response to questions, it was noted that the "Grow your own" strategy was currently focussed on engagement and development, growing workforce in key areas (i.e. social workers), and promoting internal opportunities. This was one of the ways staff vacancies were being addressed in a national context of recruitment challenges. Work to recruit social workers from South Africa was being pursued as the country had similar social work standards to the UK and there was a surplus of social workers there. With regards to the salary differentiation between Council and agency social workers, it was noted that the Government were currently consulting on the agency market in children's social care.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

35 ANNUAL HRA BUDGET 2023/24 & RENT SETTING

Councillor Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities, presented the report which established the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2023/24. It proposed an increase of 7% in rent levels, an increase for other charges in line with CPI as at September 2022 of 10.1% and a 3% reduction in the management fee paid to Six Town Housing for 2023/24. In response to questions, it was noted that Springs properties would still be owned by the Council, and its move to become a Self-Financing Tenant Management Organisation was part of the rationale for the reduction in the STH management fee.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

36 THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2023/24 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 - 2025/26

Councillor Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities, presented the following suite of budget reports:

- The Council's Budget 2023/24 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27 (Appendix 4 attached)
- The Dedicated Schools Grant and setting the Schools Budget 2023- 24
- Capital Strategy and Capital programme 2023/24
- Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2023/24
- Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2023/24

It was noted that the budget gap had grown since October, from £29m to £31m. This was set in a global context of economic crisis and national inflation and utility cost increases. An increase of 2.99% to Council Tax was being proposed along with a 2% adult social care precept. This along with government grants and £14.6m of savings were addressing the gap, with the remaining £4.8m being met from reserves.

It was agreed:

That the report be noted.

37 NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES (GREEN BOOK) PAY AWARD - ADDITIONAL DAYS LEAVE AND REMOVAL OF SCP1

Sam McVaigh, Director of People and Inclusion, presented a report which advised that, as part of the agreement of the 2022/23 pay award for NJC (Green Book) staff, annual leave will increase by 1 day for all staff under these terms and conditions from 1st April 2023. Current entitlement is a basic leave entitlement of 23 days, plus 2 extra statutory days and 1 floating day, plus 5 additional days for 5 years' service. In addition as part of the pay award spinal column point (SCP) 1 on the pay spine is to be

deleted with effect from 1st April 2023. The NJC collective agreement only directly applies to Green Book staff, however it was noted that the inclusion of a 'not less favourable' clause within some other terms and conditions of employment means that leave allocations for these staff groups have also been reviewed. It was also noted that this report had been approved by the Employment Panel on 24th January 2023.

It was agreed:

That the agreement of the changes to leave entitlements set out within this report be ratified, and the proposed approach to the deletion of SCP 1 with effect from 1 April 2023 be noted.

38 AMENDMENTS TO OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE, MONITORING OFFICER AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Sam McVaigh, Director of People and Inclusion, presented a report which advised that the Chief Executives' Handbook (which constitutes the conditions of service for Local Authority Chief Executives) has been updated nationally and this report reflected those changes. It was noted that this would necessitate changes to the Constitution and would therefore be considered by Full Council in due course.

It was agreed:

That the changes be approved and go to full Council for approval.

39 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW: PHASE 1

Sam McVaigh, Director of People and Inclusion, presented a report which set out phase one of a review of core HR systems, processes and policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, reflective of modern HR practice and align with the organisational culture described by the LET'S values. It was noted that the first part of this policy review involved work to address any areas where current policies are either outdated or posing operational challenges, and where there are current gaps in policy provision. In response to Member's questions, it was noted that Trade Union colleagues have been fully engaged in this work, and the documents reflected the results of negotiations.

It was agreed:

The JCC:

- Agreed the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- Agreed the revised Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy;
- Agreed the proposed changes to the approach to car user status designation and the required small amend to Section 6 of the Local Conditions of Service;
- Agreed the withdrawal of the Banking of Leave and Carry Over of Leave Policy, including removal of the Banked Leave arrangements, giving employees 5 years to take any leave already banked – with effect from 1st April 2023;
- Agreed the proposed revision to the Council's Local Conditions of Service in relation to annual leave, specifically to increase the maximum value of carry

forward leave to 5 days, with effect to leave to be carried into the 2024/25 leave year;

- Agreed the proposed revision to the Council's Local Conditions of Service to confirm the Council's policy position in relation to pay protection;
- Agreed the proposed amendments to the Council's current Redeployment Policy; and
- Agreed that the new and revised policies will be published on the Council's intranet pages and communicated to staff.

40 PERSONA

John Thomson advised that the extra day agreed as part of the pay award was not being implemented by Persona, who were stating they could not afford it. He asked that the Council review Persona's contract in light of this. Will Blandamer, Executive Director of Strategic Commissioning, advised that meetings were held with Persona on a regular basis; they were carrying a large cost saving plan and some aspects remained challenging. He advised that the Council continued to work with them to explore all opportunities in the market.

The Leader of the Council, Eamonn O'Brien, advised that Persona, as a wholly owned local authority trading company, were able to operate more flexibly than the Council could and could draw in more business. He stated that their performance would be reviewed against those original intentions, and work to maximise this flexibility of the current set up in this context. The Council had made its intentions clear with the implementation of the Real Living Wage and the Leader undertook to speak with Council officers and Persona along with Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health, and Wellbeing.

It was agreed:

That the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health, and Wellbeing liaise with Council officers and Persona on this issue, and report back to the Committee in due course.

41 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 18 April 2023, at 5.00pm over Teams.

COUNCILLOR Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 4.00 pm and ended at 4.46 pm)