

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4**

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Support Services Committee  
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely  
on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 4:30pm

### **P R E S E N T**

Councillor Anna Bailey (Chairman)  
Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith  
Councillor David Ambrose Smith  
Councillor Sue Austen  
Councillor Mike Bradley  
Councillor Peter Cresswell  
Councillor Julia Huffer  
Councillor Neil Hitchin  
Councillor Jo Webber

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Jo Brooks – Director, Operations  
Nicole Pema – Human Resources Manager  
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer  
Ian Smith – Principal Accountant  
Dave White – Waste Services Team Leader

#### **32. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

#### **33. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carol Sennitt and Alan Sharp.

#### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **35. MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

#### **36. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

### 37. **PERFORMANCE RELATED INCREMENTS SCHEME – ANNUAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a report (R80, previously circulated) which presented the final ratings that were awarded in accordance with the Council's new policy on Performance Related Increments that was introduced last year.

The Human Resources Manager reminded the Committee that Members had supported the introduction of the new scheme to recognise high performance of staff, those that received an 'excellent' or 'outstanding' in their annual appraisals. This was the first year that the scheme had been run and had put more responsibility on senior managers.

Not all the appraisals had been completed by the original deadline, but this had been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> July and 90% had been submitted by that date. A Moderation Panel had also been set up to review the appraisal forms. It had noted that there had been significant variances in the final submitted forms, which had made it difficult in some cases to support the 'excellent' or 'outstanding' claims. 8 claims of 'outstanding' had been received, 5 of which had been returned for further evidence. Of the 84 'excellent' or 'outstanding' claims, 47 staff members had been eligible to receive an increment to their salaries, whilst the remainder were already at the top of their scales.

The Panel thought that the management review had helped provide some consistency in the scheme and the SMART<sup>1</sup> targets had also helped. However, there were some issues about the appraisal forms which would have to be reviewed. This would be brought back to the Committee in October.

Councillor Anna Bailey confirmed that the Panel had noticed the different levels of quality in completing the paperwork and that some had not provided the evidence to back up the claims made. One exception was the Planning team, which had made a real effort and had worked hard on its review. Generally the scheme had worked well but areas for improvement had been identified. The Panel thought the onus should be on the staff to get their appraisals done, so they should seek to make appointments with their manager.

Councillor Peter Cresswell asked the Director, Operations, for her perspective of the scheme. The Director stated that considerable efforts had been made to ensure a consistent approach from the Service Leads, who carried out the appraisals. Some more training would be required to help improve that consistency. Some emphasis would also be made on staff, to push forward with the scheme, although the scheme had run very smoothly. There was still a question over whether the designation of 'satisfactory' should be replaced with 'good', as this had a more positive connotation.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith suggested that, rather than just the annual review, quarterly and six-monthly reviews could be used to catch up through the year. The Human Resources Manager stated that mid-year reviews would be re-instated.

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<sup>1</sup> SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reasonable, Timely

Councillor Anna Bailey asked a question on behalf of Councillor Alan Sharp – would staff who had not completed their appraisals be penalised? The Committee was advised that they would not be disadvantaged and could still qualify for an increment.

Councillor Mike Bradley thought that the appraisal scheme should be geared to improving the staff. The annual review should not be a shock, as important mid-term and quarterly reviews should monitor staff performance. Staff who had reached the top of their pay scales should not be left stuck in that position.

It was resolved:

That the content of the information report be noted.

38. **LOCAL AUTHORITY PAY COMPARISON AND NATIONAL LIVING WAGE IMPLEMENTATION**

The Committee received a report (R81, previously circulated) which reviewed the Council's pay arrangements and drew comparisons against other local authorities.

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee that a Freedom of Information request had been sent to 13 different local authorities in January and the results were set out in Appendix 1. Although this Council was the third smallest, and it had the smallest workforce, the salary budget was comparable to the others, the number of senior management posts was proportionate and the senior salaries lower.

The new National Living Wage (NLW) had been introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and was compulsory for all employers. The impact on the Council's salaries over the next 5 years was shown in Table 5. So over those 5 years, the total cost would be around £114,000.

Councillor David Ambrose Smith questioned the data in Table 5, as he found it difficult to believe the figures shown. Councillor Anna Bailey reckoned the table showed the expected increases in NLW and the related total payment increases. The Committee were reminded that the Council had decided to pay all under-25 staff the NLW.

Councillor Peter Cresswell asked whether the £9/hour rate had been approved by the Panel. In confirming that it had, the Human Resources Manager explained that the NLW was now replacing the National Minimum Wage.

Councillor Anna Bailey, on behalf of Councillor Alan Sharp, queried whether the bottom three pay grades had been amalgamated. In response, the Committee was informed that some re-jigging had taken place so the gradings were slightly higher since the pay award, but the grades had not been amalgamated.

Councillor Christine Ambrose Smith wondered if the staff on the lowest rate paid lower taxes. The Council should ensure that employing these people, who did good work, would not affect their chance of living with reasonable dignity.

Councillor Anna Bailey offered thanks to the Human Resources Manager for her work on this issue and was re-assured about the information presented showing where the Council was in relation to the others. An eye should be kept on this, so the Council remained competitive.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the findings of the Local Authority Pay Comparison be noted;
- (ii) That the introduction of the new National Living Wage, at a rate of £7.20 per hour, which came into effect on 1 April 2016, be supported.

### 39. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a report (R82, previously circulated) which provided budget monitoring information for services under the remit of the Committee.

The Principal Accountant advised the Committee that this was the first report of 2016/17 on its budget, which showed an expected underspend on its revenue budget. This was the result of a number of underspends, offset against the funding of the Transformation Programme. The capital budget was expected to meet its budget for the year.

Councillor Mike Bradley anticipated that the investment in the Transformation Programme would reduce running costs and provide savings in the future.

Councillor Anna Bailey, on behalf of Councillor Alan Sharp, sought clarification on whether the costs of additional staff had been included and queried the sum for the Homelessness National Practitioner Support. He also wanted to know why there was a £1.3million variance relating to the refuse collection service.

Councillor Bailey thought the process around additional posts had to be justified. This was looked at by the Senior Management Team and the Chairman of the Committee. Very often a case was presented showing how this would be paid for and the potential for income. This had not been reflected in the budget forecast, as this matter was dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The Director, Operations explained that the Council, through negotiations, was now hosting the National Practitioners' Support Service, which had had come with its own budget from central Government

*Councillor Neil Hitchin joined the meeting at this point, 5:02pm.*

The Director continued, stating that the budget could not be used by the Council, as it is for projects associated with homelessness. However, any interest made from the capital sum was kept by the Council for its own use, though given current interest rates this would not amount to a significant sum.

The Principal Accountant thought the refuse collection variance was due to a timing issue with the accounts, and probably referred to the grant the Council received, which went into the revenue budget. Clarification for this would be sought and Members of the Committee notified via the Democratic Services Officer<sup>2</sup>.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Committee noted it had a projected underspend of £130,824 compared to its revenue budget of £6,278,280;
- (ii) That the Committee noted it had a projected capital programme outturn of £1,232,444.

40. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Transformation Programme Sub-Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were received.

41. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan.

42. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of items 12 and 14 because it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, 2 and 6 Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as Amended).

43. **APPOINTMENTS, TRANSFERS AND RESIGNATIONS**

The Committee received an exempt report (R83, previously circulated) which provided details of staff appointments, transfers and resignations for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee that there had been 9 appointments, 3 transfers and 3 leavers over that period. All the leavers had resigned voluntarily. The turnover was 1.67%, compared to 8.2% for the same period last year.

It was resolved:

That the content of the information report be noted.

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<sup>2</sup> This was confirmed by the Principal Accountant and Members were informed on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

44. **WASTE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

The Committee received an exempt report (R84, previously circulated) which considered the Council's waste contract.

The Waste Services Team Leader acquainted the Committee with the current situation and sought to consider the future of the waste contract. A Councillor Working Party had been set up to consider the future service specification and delivery method. In addition Waste and Resources Action Programme consultants were carrying out a cost analysis of future provision. However, the timescales within the existing contract end date were becoming tight and therefore recommendations by the Waste Review Working Party were being brought before this Committee.

The Committee asked questions relating to the current service, the Council's recycling rates and the possible options for future service delivery.

It was resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be agreed.

45. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 5:36pm.