

CIVIC AFFAIRS

30 January 2019
5.30 - 6.30 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Benstead (Vice-Chair), O'Connell, Robertson, Thornburrow and Tunnacliffe

Other Councillor Present: Councillor Moore, Executive Councillor for Environmental Services and City Centre

Officers:

Chief Executive: Antoinette Jackson
Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba
Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson
Head of Shared Waste: Trevor Nicoll
Interim Deputy Head of Finance: Ken Trotter
Business Development Manager: Tony Stead
Support Services Manager: Karl Tattam
Committee Manager: James Goddard

Others Present:

Ernst & Young External Auditor: Suresh Patel

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

19/1/Civ Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Dalzell, Councillor Tunnacliffe attended as the Alternate.

The Committee held a minute's silence for Councillor Gawthroe who formerly sat on the Civic Affairs Committee.

19/2/Civ Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Benstead	19/5/Civ	Personal: Council appointed Trustee of Cambridge Live.
Councillor Robertson	19/8/Civ	Personal: Council appointed Trustee of Local Government

		Pension Scheme.
--	--	-----------------

19/3/Civ Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19/4/Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

19/5/Civ 2018-19 Statement of Accounts - Accounting Policies and Significant Areas of Judgement

The committee received a report from the Interim Deputy Head of Finance.

The Audit and Accounts Regulations govern the preparation, approval and publication of local authority accounts. For the 2018/19 financial year there was a requirement for the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151) of the Council to approve draft unaudited accounts by the 31 May and for the audited accounts to be approved by Civic Affairs by 31 July.

The Independent Person submitted a written statement:

It would be helpful to hear from Ernst & Young that all of the areas mentioned in Caroline's covering report for item 5 will be addressed through their work.

I can see that some areas are picked up but wasn't sure about Cambridge Live and Clay Farm.

The Interim Deputy Head of Finance said all of the areas mentioned in the covering report would be addressed through Ernst & Young's work.

Councillor Robertson sought clarification on the issues discussed during the 2017/18 audit with Ernst and Young, which would still be relevant in the current financial year. The Interim Deputy Head of Finance said that mainly they would and that Cambridge Investment Partnership, Clay Farm Community Centre, Business Rates Appeals Provision, Cambridge Live and Future Events were significant areas of judgement and change for 2018/19.

Unanimously resolved to note and approve the proposed presentational changes, accounting policies and significant areas of accounting judgement in relation to the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts.

19/6/Civ Ernst & Young Audit Plan

The Committee received a report from the Ernst & Young External Auditor.

The Audit Planning report from Ernst & Young summarised the strategy for the audit of the financial statements and the associated value for money conclusion for 2018/19. The External Auditor confirmed the financial statements were sound and that Ernst and Young had no concerns about the council's value for money.

The following was said in response to Members' questions:

- i. Ernst & Young External Auditor: The Cambridge Live fee range in the Officer's report was an estimate that may vary once Ernst & Young had reviewed Cambridge Live figures. The report was written before the decision was made to bring Cambridge Live back in-house.
- ii. Head of Finance: Before leaving Charity Main had been diligent in her hand over of notes and knowledge to colleagues in the Finance Department. The Head of Finance would review the situation to mitigate risks of an experienced officer leaving, but no issues were expected. The Interim Deputy Head of Finance was experienced in this area.
- iii. Head of Finance: Wished to reassure Committee that whilst bringing Cambridge Live back in-house was a risk, a number of officers were supporting the hand over. The Head of Finance was overseeing arrangements but not all of these were under the Council's control.

Councillor Robertson said the Council would apply appropriate financial systems.

Unanimously resolved to note the contents of the external audit plan.

19/7/Civ Draft Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 and Implementation of 2019 Pay Award

The Committee received a report from the Head of Human Resources.

The report set out a draft pay policy statement as required under the Localism Act. The Localism Act requires the Council to have considered, approved and

published a pay policy statement for each financial year. This must be approved by Full Council and be in place by 31 March each year.

In response to the report Councillors welcomed the apprentice scheme and commented that the City Council offered better rates of pay for apprentices than other organisations.

The Head of Human Resources said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Trade Unions were supportive of the pay proposals.
- ii. GMB had previously responded to the proposals. Unison's position on the consultation in the Officer's report was now known.

Unanimously resolved to:

- i. Recommend to Council the draft Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 attached as Appendix 1.
- ii. Note the position on the consultation with Unison members on the proposed pay scale changes, and to receive an update at the Civic Affairs meeting.
- iii. Recommend to Council the proposal to introduce the proposed changes to the Council's pay scale with effect from April 2019, attached in Appendix 2 of the Officer's report and to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources to implement the changes to the Council's pay scale.
- iv. Agree the renaming of the previous grade of JNC1 as 'Head of Service'.

19/8/Civ Local Government Pension Scheme - Employers Discretions

The Committee received a report from the Support Services Manager.

The paper outlined Cambridge City Council's proposed policy statement on Employer Discretions for the Local Government Pension Scheme.

In response to Councillor Robertson's question the Support Services Manager said the discretions policy was in-line with other Local Authorities in the Cambridgeshire area that we were aware of.

Unanimously resolved:

- i. To approve the proposed policy statement on employer discretions (Appendix A of the Officer's report).
- ii. To authorise the Head of Human Resources to determine decisions relating to the merits of individual cases.

- iii. That Council Officers will continue to review the statement every 3 years and / or in line with changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme as advised by the Local Government Pensions Committee and the Administering Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council), and any recommended changes will go before Civic Affairs for approval.

19/9/Civ Waste Complaints April - October 2018

The Committee received a report from the Head of Shared Waste and Business Development Manager.

The Officer's report provided an analysis of complaints made relating to the council regarding waste services during the period of April – December 2018.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. The complaints logging system needed to be clear what was a complaint and what was a comment. Partly because some feedback could be classified as a comment or a complaint. Also to avoid the council being criticised for situations outside of its control.
- ii. Ward Councillors picked up low level grumbings that were not reported to the Waste Service such as empty bins being left on pavements.

The Head of Shared Waste and Business Development Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Council logged customer feedback as a complaint or comment in accordance with residents' wishes. The system asked residents to clarify if they were making a compliment, comment or complaint. Usually more complaints were logged than compliments (these were usually given verbally).
- ii. Various systems were consolidated in 2018 to log responses through different communication methods (email, phone etc) in one place. This led to a spike in complaints recorded (but no change in the actual number received (9181 of the Officer's report)) as customer contacts were now formally being logged in one system, when they were not always done so before.
- iii. Issues could be tracked and escalated if customers were not satisfied with responses.
- iv. The system provided clear information on issues and responses. The same information could be shared with residents and bin crews to give them real time updates.
- v. The system was being streamlined so residents could report issues at their convenience.

- vi. Issues beyond the council's control could lead to resident's complaints such as blocked roads or bad weather preventing bin collections.
- vii. Blocked roads were an issue for both city and South Cambridgeshire areas.
- viii. The triage team monitored residents' feedback and filtered the feedback to ensure it had appropriate headings. Occasionally 'complaints' may be changed to 'service requests' etc.
- ix. Officers asked that all issues (complaints, comments and compliments) were reported to the Waste Service so trends could be monitored and reported. The service responded to trends by training lorry crews to work better with residents. For example 130 staff had just been trained about bin placement.
- x. The complaints report covered waste collection issues from residents and businesses. The system did not currently break figures down to ward level, as the service was built on collection rounds and some of these crossed over wards. It would be possible to provide data based on collection days. . It might be possible to manually produce ward level issue reports for councillors upon request, but this would be time consuming. Officers would explore whether the ICT system might be able to break figures down to ward level in future.
- xi. Streets and Open Spaces, Waste and Housing Services had the highest number of complaints across the City Council. These could be reported back to Councillor O'Connell in more detail after committee if she wished.
- xii. The underground waste collection system used in the Eddington (North West Cambridge) Development has been well received. Officers were reviewing if similar underground collection systems could be used on other new developments in future. This was more straight forward than retrofitting existing developments.

The Executive Councillor for Environmental Services and City Centre addressed the Committee:

- i. The number of recorded complaints had increased. This was due to the new reporting system.
- ii. Referred to report p181. The service had increased the number of successful collections to over 99.8%.
- iii. The position of bins was regularly commented on. Crews had to take bins long distances from homes to where bins could be emptied. The number of complaints was low in comparison to the number of collections made.

- iv. The reporting system did not register the number of verbal compliments given to crews on their rounds. There were more happy residents than the report figures suggested.

Unanimously resolved to note the contents of the Officer's report.

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

CHAIR