

**CIVIC AFFAIRS**

27 January 2021

5.30 - 6.30 pm

**Present:** Councillors Sargeant (Chair), Davey (Vice-Chair), Chadwick, Dalzell, O'Reilly and Thornburrow

**Officers:**

Chief Executive: Andrew Grant

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Deputy Head of Finance: Jody Etherington

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Democratic Services Manager: Gary Clift

**Others Present:**

Ernst &amp; Young: Tony Poynton and Suresh Patel

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****21/1/Civ Apologies**

Apologies were received from the Council's Independent Person.

**21/2/Civ Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

**21/3/Civ Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

**21/4/Civ Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**21/5/Civ Draft Pay Policy Statement 2021/22**

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 31st March each year.

The officers said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The level of fee that a Returning Officer receives can be reviewed by the Committee and as this had not been reviewed for over 10 years the matter will be brought back to Committee in time for May 2022 elections.
- ii. The introduction of Exit Cap Regulations as referred to in 3.7 onwards of the report, may result in other cases being put to the Employment (Senior Officer) Committee/Full Council and/or amendment to the Pay Policy and Pensions Discretions Statements.

**Resolved to:**

- i. Recommend Council approved the draft Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 attached as Appendix 1 to the officer's report.
- ii. Note that a review of senior officer salaries is now scheduled for late 2021.
- iii. Note the position in relation to the £95k Exit Cap regulations and potential changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which may require changes to the Pay Policy and Pensions Discretions Statements in 2021.
- iv. Recommend Council delegated authority to the Head of Human Resources to update the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 should a chief executive and/or chief officer and/or NJC pay award be agreed.

## **21/6/Civ    Annual External Audit Letter 2019/20**

The Committee received the Annual Audit Letter from Ernst & Young, and representatives from EY summarised the key issues arising.

The Chair requested that members of the Committee should receive a briefing on the new Code of Audit Practice 2020/21 in an appropriate timescale. The Committee will need to re-consider the dates of meetings currently scheduled for July and October 2021 in the likely event of the Government agreeing to a change in timing the completion of local authority statement of accounts.

The Chair and spokes commended the teamwork of the Head and Deputy Head of Finance, the finance officers and the team at EY on the improved work undertaken on the 19/20 Audit.

**Resolved to:**

- i. Note the contents of the Annual Audit Letter 2019/20.

**21/7/Civ     Review of the Members' Allowance Scheme**

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager. Jane Phillips, a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel was present to answer Committee questions.

The report detailed the review of the Allowance Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Regulations require a review after four years if an Allowance Scheme uses an index for annual increases. The index applying to the current scheme, the National Living Wage, has been in place since May 2016.

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

- i. Thanked the Panel members for the work they had done.
- ii. Recognised that a review had had to be done but wondered what type of next review would be undertaken in the autumn.
- iii. Reflected on the difficult job councillors were undertaking in the current pandemic.
- iv. Would encourage continued focus on the importance of a scheme that can support a Council which reflects equality and diversity of the area it represents- acknowledging that a Scheme alone cannot achieve this.

Jane Phillips responded that the planned review in the autumn 2021 would encourage contributions from the wider Membership of the Council and review the variety of partnership working, so a more fundamental piece of work similar to that undertaken in the last full review.

**Resolved to:**

- i. Agree the 2020/21 allowance scheme and that it is not index linked for 2021/22 (ie. kept at the rate for 2020/21).

**21/8/Civ Appointment of Temporary Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer**

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager.

Council agreed on 17 December 2020 to appoint Robert Pollock as Chief Executive. Members are recommended to have in place temporary arrangements for the statutory positions of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer whilst the necessary transition between the interim Chief Executive and new Chief Executive takes place.

**Resolved to:**

- i. Appoint Andrew Grant as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the period 19 April 2021 to 14 May 2021, after which Robert Pollock will assume both roles as set out in Article 11 of the Council's Constitution.

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

**CHAIR**