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Civic Affairs

Civ/1

Wednesday, 8 February 2023

CIVIC AFFAIRS

8 February 2023

5.32 - 6.50 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Carling (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Davey, Hauk and Thornburrow

Also, present (virtually) Councillor Bennett

Officers:

Chief Executive: Robert Pollock

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Deputy Head of Finance: Neil Krajewski

Democratic Services Manager: Gary Clift

Head of Human Resources: Deborah Simpson

Electoral Services Manager: Vicky Jenner

Committee Manager: Chris Connor

Meeting Producer: James Goddard

Others Present:

Ernst & Young Audit Partner: Mark Hodgson

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/1/Civ Apologies

Apologies were received from Council's Independent Person Rob Bennett.

23/2/Civ Declarations of Interest

Item	Councillor	Interest
23/7/Civ	Cllr Davey	Personal: Board member of Cambridge Investment Partnership

23/3/Civ Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 September 2022 and 03 November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/4/Civ Public Questions

There were no public questions.

23/5/Civ Officer Delegated Decisions**5a To Implement the National Joint Council for Local Government Services of Pay Awards 2022/23**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

5b To implement the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities Pay Award for 2022-23

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

5c Implementation of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities Pay Award for 2022-23

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

5d Special Responsibility Allowance - Cllr Anna Smith, Deputy-Mayor fulfilling Mayoral duties while CPCA Mayor Dr. Nick Johnson takes leave of absence

The Members made the following comments regarding this report:

- i. Asked for full report about the amount of work required of the Acting Mayor.
- ii. Would like something from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) explaining why they are not paying this.
- iii. Felt there should have been a contingency plan for an Acting Mayor and how they would be paid if the Mayor was forced to take a leave of absence, as has happened in this case.

In response to statements from Members the Chief Executive Officer made the following comments:

- i. Combined Authorities were relatively new institutions. When the statutory powers enabled by Parliament to create them were established there was no provision to provide a salary for the Deputy Mayor in the event of the Mayor taking a leave of absence. As far as the Chief Executive was aware, this is the first instance that this has happened in the country.
- ii. Would like to put on record that the Council did seek advice from the Independent Review Panel. They reflected there was no mechanism to cover the additional allowance for the Deputy Mayor. The Independent Review Panel stated that would have preferred to be more generous but felt constrained by the Councils own allowances. They have spoken to Government about this.
- iii. The CPCA can only pay a remunerated salary to the elected Mayor. There is no legal provision to pay a salary to Anna Smith as Acting Mayor.
- iv. The Independent Review Panel did agree a pay award due to the time commitments of the role. The amount is based on the allowances that the City Council currently

provides as payment to Members who serve on the Combined Authority Board. This is a pro-rated amount.

- v. The Independent Remuneration Panel did not feel that they could go beyond our current set of allowances.
- vi. Agreed to follow up and bring back to the next Committee Meeting on 15 May 2023 if that was what Members would like.
- vii. They have contacted Government about this situation and the discussions would need to continue.

The Committee asked to a further report at the next meeting on this matter.

23/6/Civ Draft Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

The committee received a report introduced by the Head of Human Resources.

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

- i. Regarding the high cost of living in Cambridge, if hiring from lower cost of living areas would need attractive salaries to have people move to the area.
- ii. Cannot rely on it being Cambridge, need to have salary affordable to be able to move to and live in the area.
- iii. It was not about individuals; it was about salaries for the roles.
- iv. Members asked the Head of Human Resources to bring an update and further information to the January/February Civic Affairs scrutiny meeting in 2024.

In response to Members' questions the Chief Executive Officer said the following:

- i. The salary amounts were linked to the Senior Management Review.
- ii. These salaries were baked into the forward savings.
- iii. Council needs to consider the bottom line.
- iv. Council could consider a moving allowance.
- v. Could get more data and evidence.
- vi. Cost of living must be considered.
- vii. All pay scales, not just Senior Management, would need to be looked at.
- viii. Would not prioritise Senior Management pay only.

Resolved (by 5 votes to 0 – unanimous of those able to vote) to:

- i. Consider and recommend to Council the draft Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 attached as Appendix 1.

- ii. To consider and recommend to Council the pay proposals for chief executive, director and assistant director level pay bands following the 2022 review of senior officer salaries and as they relate to the senior management review.
- iii. To recommend to Council to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources to update the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 following consideration and approval of the proposed changes to the pay bands for the roles of Chief Executive, Director and Assistant Director.

23/7/Civ External Auditor's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022

The committee received a report introduced by Audit Partner from Ernst & Young (EY).

A statement was read out by the Committee Manager from the Council's Independent Person Rob Bennett:

I would like to say well done to the finance team and the external auditors for working together to deliver the audit completion ahead of 30 November 22.

The conclusions in the auditor's annual report are all positive and reflect very well on the work of councillors and officers.

Resolved to note (by 5 votes to 0 – unanimous of those able to vote) to:

- i. The contents of the Auditor's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022

23/8/Civ 2022/23 Statement of Accounts - Accounting Policies and Significant Areas of Judgement

The committee received a report introduced by the Deputy Head of Finance:

In response to Members' questions the Deputy Head of Finance said the following:

- i. Buildings where there was significant work required to bring them up to what would be required by legislation, would have an impact regarding the valuation of those assets as those costs have not been built into the valuation.

A statement was read out by the Committee Manager from the Council's Independent Person Rob Bennett:

This is a very clear report. The area that I would keep under closest review is that the value of investment properties given the uncertain economic climate that we are in.

Resolved (by 5 votes to 0 – unanimous of those able to vote) to:

- i. To note that there are no significant changes to accounting policies anticipated for the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts.
- ii. To note and approve the proposed critical judgements and major sources of estimation uncertainty in respect of the 2022-23 Statement of Accounts.
- iii. To note the progress made in streamlining the 2021-22 accounts and to request further feedback from Civic Affairs Committee members on the current format of the Statement of Accounts, and suggestions for improvement.

23/9/Civ Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer

The committee received a report introduced by the Electoral Services Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Electoral Services Manager said the following:

- i. There was no remuneration for the appointment of a Deputy Registration Officer from the Government. The Chief Executive Officer added that there had been some New Burdens funding for these changes, however we will not know if this is enough until we have gone through a cycle.
- ii. Regarding 2.1 of the recommendation, the sentence "one or more" means that the Electoral Registration officer can appoint a deputy if the Electoral Services Manager became unavailable or if there were other provisions that were to come in after the elections act meaning that one would not be enough
- iii. The Chief Executive Officer acting as Returning Officer stated that he already had the delegated authority to appoint Deputy Returning Officers. However, the power to appoint a Deputy Registration Officer lies with this Committee.

Resolved (by 5 votes to 0 – unanimous of those able to vote) to:

- i. Delegate to the ERO the power to appoint one or more deputies and to revoke or vary such appointments as necessary.
- ii. Note that if recommendation 2.1 is agreed, the ERO would be minded to appoint the Electoral Services Manager as Deputy ERO for Cambridge.

23/10/Civ Leave Policy for Councillors

The committee received a report introduced by the Democratic Services Manager.

In response to Members' questions the Democratic Services Manager said the following:

- i. "Caring needs" was not limited to only children but anyone who would be in need of care.
- ii. The pro-rata special responsibility allowance (SRA) was for a Councillor who steps into for example an Executive Councillors role during the time the Councillor on leave is away. The Councillor who has had to take leave will still receive their SRA while they are on leave. The SRA does not cover councillor work covered by the basic allowance eg. ward work.
- iii. There had been continuous discussions with Central Government about embracing advantages of online voting and ways of working that were in effect during COVID.
- iv. Group Leaders, and their delegated representatives have been involved in the drafting of this report.

A written statement from Councillor Porrer in support of the report was read out by the Committee Manager.

Resolved (by 5 votes to 0 – unanimous of those able to vote) to:

- i. Approve the Leave Policy for Councillors (appended).
- ii. Infant feeding by a Councillor be it breast-fed or bottle-fed is permitted at council meetings.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

CHAIR