

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 27th March, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Dick Edginton (Chairman)
Councillor Edward Mossop (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Terry Aldridge, Claire Arnold, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Wendy Bowkett, Danny Brookes, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Graham Cullen, Mark Dannatt, Roger Dawson, Carleen Dickinson, Stephen Eyre, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Adam Grist, Will Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Travis Hesketh, Darren Hobson, George Horton, Rosalind Jackson, Neil Jones, Sam Kemp, Thomas Kemp, Steve Kirk, James Knowles, Terry Knowles, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Daniel McNally, Carl Macey, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Kate Marnoch, Graham Marsh, Fiona Martin, M.B.E., Daniel Simpson, Terry Taylor, Robert Watson and Ruchira Yarsley.

99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stef Bristow, Billy Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Richard Cunnington, Colin Davie, Sid Dennis, Sarah Devereux, Stephen Evans, Steve McMillan, Ellie Marsh and Paul Rickett.

100. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting, Members were invited to declare any relevant interests. None were received.

101. UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2023/2024 AND PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2024/2025:

A report was submitted by the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs detailing the proposed Updated Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 and Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025, pages 1 to 28 of the Supplementary Agenda refer.

The report highlighted that under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, a Pay Policy Statement was required to be produced annually and must be approved by Council. This had been a requirement since 2012/13. The Pay Policy Statement, once approved, must be published on the Council's website by 31 March 2024. This report presented an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 (Appendix A) and the policy for 2024/2025 (Appendix B).

In addition, it was noted that the policy statement covered three central areas:

- The remuneration of the Chief Officers

- The remuneration of the lowest paid employees
- The relationship between Chief Officers remuneration and that of other officers

The Leader of the Council advised Members that ordinarily this statement would be included with the budget papers, however this year time had been taken to reflect best practice and to ensure that the updates through the year had been included. The ongoing Partnership alignment of terms and conditions had necessitated more updates than would ordinarily be expected and it was expected that this would continue through 2024/25. It was also highlighted that it would be helpful to proceed with a much-needed constitutional review across the Partnership that had been recommended by peers and scrutiny, to assist this work.

Following which it was Proposed and Seconded,

That Council considered the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 and Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025:

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

A Member queried whether the appraisal system used across the Partnership was in written form and whether it was linked to any targets/increases in salary. It was further queried whether there were clear job descriptions for employees to enable them to be appraised accurately and whether information and documents from the appraisals were shared with the staff.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the pay policy statement was such a prescribed area of the Council's work in terms of pay policy employment law that he was unable to give an accurate answer, however was happy to provide an answer in detail after taking advice from the Legal Manager and Chief Executive after the Meeting.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Council operated an appraisal system and referred Members to the Annual Delivery Plan that ran alongside the budget recently approved. One of the areas that people's performance was assessed against was whether they were delivering on those tasks that had been supported by Council. It was highlighted that as there were teams of people, it was not always possible for a person to deliver an outcome on their own so this would be linked to a team target rather than a personal development target.

Other than the changes to senior officers' pay, there were no financial implications in terms of pay progression. There was not a proper performance related pay system in place for the majority of the workforce, however when appraisals were undertaken it was an opportunity to understand if there were any educational or support needs required by individuals. Likewise, if there were instances of performance that needed addressing, steps could be taken to look at how assistance could be provided

through the capability policy, for example, so there was a very established process in the Council.

A Member asked for clarification whether each employee was required to have a personal development plan. In response, the Chief Executive stated that this tended to link to people's professional memberships and qualifications and some staff had to undertake continual professional development reports to their statutory body that they worked with, for example a planner or environmental health worker may need to record how many hours worked on certain topics. This differed dependent on the role, but it was confirmed that personal development was covered as part of the appraisal process.

A Member highlighted that the role of Chief Executive was across the Partnership, however noted that East Lindsey District Council was the employing council and the remuneration was split as 46% (ELDC), 31% (SHDC) and 23% (BBC). It was queried that should the Chief Executive resign, whether the appointment would be from ELDC or whether it would go to another council in the Partnership.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that East Lindsey would be the host council and an appraisal would be taken across the three authorities about the recruitment process. It was confirmed that ELDC would be the employing authority.

It was further queried how often staff salaries were reviewed and how these compared with their counterparts in the other partner councils as he was aware that there were pay discrepancies in some roles across the Partnership. It was stressed that there must be equalisation across the three councils as this was bad for morale.

N.B. At this point in the Meeting, Councillor George Horton asked it be noted that he had a family member employed by ELDC.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that terms and conditions across the three councils needed to be understood and regularised. This had been picked up by the peer review and was currently a work in progress.

A Member queried why, when it had taken several years to get to this point since the merger of the councils and creation of the Partnership that the pay policy statement and terms and conditions of employment were now appearing to be rushed through.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that the Partnership had not been in existence for that long and highlighted that ELDC was in an alliance with Boston Borough Council before the Partnership was created when South Holland District Council came on board. Furthermore, he considered it timely and appropriate. It was explained that the issues of the terms and conditions of employment was initially picked up in the Memorandum of Understanding between the three councils and this was ongoing work and there was an

ambition to align policies across the three councils. Therefore, nothing included in the pay policy statement was unnecessary and was part of the process of three councils working together and employing a senior management team on that basis, recognising this was how the Partnership operated.

N.B. Councillor James Knowles joined the Meeting at 6.41pm.

A Member highlighted that terms and conditions were being discussed, however stated that the paper presented was in relation to the pay policy statement, therefore pay should be the topic for discussion. It was stressed that there was a clear need for this to be harmonised across the three councils as pay was important to all staff and it must be equalised for ELDC staff and that it was important that a timeline was set for this. The current situation and differences in pay did not foster good relationships or help with recruitment and retention and was not good for morale or the Council.

Following which, it was Proposed and Seconded that an amendment be made to the pay policy statement 'that equalisation of pay scales must, within the Partnership, come within the next 2 years'.

In response, the Chief Executive explained that this was not something that could be included in the pay policy statements, however advised that there was a commitment in the statement to align staff pay. With regards to the proposed amendment put forward it may be better to assign this responsibility to an individual or a committee, however did not consider it would be a problem for this to be added as an additional recommendation to the report.

The Leader of the Council agreed that there needed to be harmonisation across the three authorities, however there were interesting challenges, including competing with the relevant market areas to the respective councils. Historically ELDC had been where it was in terms of its pay and terms and conditions and inevitably the merging of three councils had highlighted this as an issue. The intention was to address this fairly and correctly but it could not be rushed into and trusted that the Chief Executive and senior management team would pick up the challenge.

The Chief Executive added that there were similar opinions from staff across all three councils relating to pay differences, however whilst there was some alignment there were areas where there were some marked differences. Some roles could be very different in terms of its level of supervision, qualification requirements and the extent of that role. Therefore, aligning pay did not solve the problem and it was the alignment of the job evaluation scheme that would solve the problem by having a single scheme for the three councils. Members were advised that there was a report being presented to Council in May 2024 which covered phase one of the alignment of terms and conditions.

A Member disagreed with the Leader's comment regarding competing market areas and highlighted that there were much better transport options available

in the South Holland and Boston areas. In East Lindsey, some incentive needed to be available to entice Members to the area and this had to be the pay packet.

There were no further comments or questions to the proposed amendment.

The Leader asked for clarification on the proposed amendment before it went to the vote. In response, the Chief Executive clarified that Council had requested that the Chief Executive took forward the equalisation of pay and for it to be concluded within a 2-year period.

As a further point of clarity, a Member queried whether the seconder to the motion should re-consider as he had declared having a family member employed by the Council. Councillor Horton withdrew, following which Councillor Kirk seconded the proposal.

The Leader of the Council was happy to support the amendment, however highlighted to Members that there were other elements to the issue apart from aligning pay, including the job descriptions and the evaluation process. Therefore, he would like a caveat adding that was interlinked and understood by Council that if in two years' time this had not been achieved due to other issues that were a priority for the Chief Executive to deal with, it was not possible to meet this timeline.

Following which, a Member queried whether it would be possible to have an update after one year to ensure that the process was working. The Leader of the Council responded that he was happy to provide this.

Further to discussion, the amendment was withdrawn and it was Proposed and Seconded that a third recommendation be added to the report as follows:

'That this Council instructs the Chief Executive to take forward the alignment of pay across the Partnership.' (The intention is to be completed within a two-year period of the date of this report, with an update on progress provided in a year's time)'.

Debate returned to the original recommendations plus the additional recommendation.

A Member commented that he was delighted to see that the Council paid the real living wage and asked for clarification that over 18s, and up to 22 years of age were also paid the current real living wage of £12 per hour. In response, the Chief Executive advised that ELDC had paid the real living wage to staff regardless of age, but would be grateful of the opportunity to check this and would confirm this in writing after the Meeting.

It was further highlighted that the Living Wage Foundation rate was scheduled to increase in November 2024 which would result in Appendix B of the Pay Policy to require a review to take into account the new recommended rate of pay.

A Member referred to page 3 of the report that referred to the introduction of performance related pay for the Chief Executive role and queried who was responsible for assessing the pay performance.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that ELDC was the employing authority but would work with the Leaders of SHDC and BBC to do the appraisal and understand the targets for the Chief Executive and confirmed that it would be ELDC that led on the process.

A Member asked for clarification on the timeframe for completing staff job appraisals. The Chief Executive confirmed that job appraisals took place annually.

A Member asked for clarification before going to the vote whether the third recommendation made any difference as Boston Borough Council had already voted on the pay policy statement. In response, the Chief Executive advised that he did not consider the additional recommendation to be an arbitrary point as the work was already within the Partnership's annual delivery plans and considered that the additional recommendation provided a level of confidence and assurance for the Council.

Upon being put to the vote, the vote was carried.

One abstention was noted.

RESOLVED

- That the updated Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024, at Appendix A, be approved.
- That the Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025, at Appendix B, be approved.
- That the Chief Executive be instructed to take forward the alignment of pay across the Partnership.' (The intention is to be completed within a two-year period of the date of this report, with an update on progress provided in a year's time).

102. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was confirmed as the AGM on Wednesday 22 May 2024, commencing at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.