

## **GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 February 2023

### **Present:**

Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe (Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Botting (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Nicholas Bennett J.P.,  
Robert Evans, Kira Gabbert, Mike Jack, Jonathan Laidlaw,  
Keith Onslow, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger,  
Sam Webber, Alisa Igoe and Simon Jeal

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Julie Ireland and Councillor Simon Fawthrop

### **30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Josh King who was replaced by Councillor Simon Jeal and from Councillor Ryan Thomson, who was replaced by Councillor Alisa Igoe.

### **31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **32 QUESTIONS**

Two questions had been received for oral reply – these are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

### **33 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2022**

It was noted that there had been no further questions raised by Mr Gibbons about committee meetings.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2022 be confirmed.**

### **34 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT AND ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN'S LETTER 2021/22**

Report CEF 22047

The Council produced an Annual Complaints Report each year setting out statistics on the complaints it received and also giving an oversight of the annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman letter. The 2021/22

Annual Report had already been considered by the Adult Care and Health and Children, Education and Families PDS Committees.

In response to a question about the Council's Planning Service, officers confirmed that there had not been an increase in Ombudsman complaints about planning matters. The Vice-Chairman of Development Control Committee reassured members that the backlog of planning applications had been largely overcome, apart from some more complex cases.

**RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Annual Complaints Report and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman letter be noted.**

### **35 PAY AWARD 2023/24**

Under the local terms and conditions of employment framework, the Committee was required to make a recommendation on the annual pay award to full Council. Pursuant to the local framework, the annual pay award review was now part of the Council's budget planning process. This requirement was a key driver for coming out of the national/regional pay negotiating frameworks.

The Committee considered the proposed pay award for 2023/24, including a late joint submission from the trade unions and a response from the Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs. The main proposal was a flat 5.75% increase for 2023/24 with an additional 2% in response to the unexpected inflation that had occurred since the 2022/23 pay increase had been agreed. In addition, a further £200k would be provided for merit awards linked to appraisals, taking the total to £400k. Senior managers at Assistant Director level and above were not eligible for these awards.

Some members suggested that the Council should commit to paying at least the London Living Wage for all its staff, and Cllr Kathy Bance requested further information about the roles that attracted these lowest salaries. Officers confirmed that the Council did comply with the statutory National Minimum Wage and contended that it was important not to undermine pay differentials and the job evaluation scheme by distorting the lowest grades. The Council did face recruitment and retention challenges, but these were for professionals such as social workers, engineers and planners, not lower paid staff.

An amendment to use £180k of the money allocated for merit awards to top up the pay of the lowest paid workers was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Alisa Igoe, but this was not supported.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) full Council be recommended to approve the following:**

**(i) A flat 2% pay increase for all staff (excluding teachers who are covered by a separate statutory pay negotiating process) in response to**

**the unexpected spiralling inflation post 2022/3 pay award agreed by full Council; the increase would be effective from 1st April 2023;**

**(ii) A flat 5.75% pay increase for all staff (excluding teachers who are covered by a separate statutory pay negotiating process) for 2023/24;**

**(iii) An additional £200k towards Merited Rewards, for 2023/24, bringing the total to £400k for rewarding staff for exceptional performance;**

**(iv) That the Trade Unions' pay claim for staff be rejected (see paragraph 3.12 of the report and attached Appendices.**

**(2) Members also note that, as in the previous years since coming out of the nationally/regionally negotiated frameworks, Bromley staff will receive the 2023/24 pay increase in time for the April pay.**

### **36 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24**

Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council was required to publish a Pay Policy Statement which had to be approved by full Council every year. Members considered the 2023/24 Pay Policy Statement.

An amendment that the Council should adopt the London Living Wage was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Alisa Igoe, but this was not supported.

**RESOLVED that full Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 Pay Policy Statement.**

### **37 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023/24** **CSD23003**

The regulations governing Members' Allowances required that, before the beginning of each financial year, the Council should make a scheme of allowances for that year, taking into account the advice of the London Councils independent panel on councillor remuneration.

The report detailed the proposed allowances for 2023/24. The Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances were not part of the Members Allowances Scheme, but were usually considered in conjunction with it. The Scheme had to be agreed by full Council – this would be at the meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

In many previous years, members had decided not to increase the allowances, but if Members were minded to increase the allowances a reasonable guide would be the increase recommended for Council staff, which, subject to Member confirmation, was expected to be 7.75%. Proposals based on a 7.75% increase but with some other changes have been received from the majority group – these were summarised at paragraph 3.5 of the report. Cllr Simon Fawthrop attended the meeting to explain these proposals,

which he had formulated following an examination of allowances across London. In particular, most Councils had an allowance for their Deputy Leader, and very few Councils (probably only three) had an allowance for the leader of the second largest minority group.

Councillor Julie Ireland also attended the meeting and pointed out that the London Councils recommendations did include an allowance for the second largest minority group leader.

The Committee discussed the various options, including in particular the allowances for Executive Assistants and Vice-Chairmen and the proposal to remove the allowance for the second minority party leader, which a number of members opposed.

A proposal to increase the basic allowance by 4.5%, increase the allowances for the Chairmen of the Audit and Risk Management and Pensions Committees to match those for PDS Committee Chairmen, remove the allowances for Executive Assistants and retain all other allowances at the current level, transferring the saving of £61k to the Council's Welfare fund, was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Kathy Bance, but not supported.

A proposal to freeze all allowances at the current level was moved by Cllr Sam Webber and seconded by Cllr Mike Jack, but was not supported.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The Members Allowances Scheme 2023/24 and the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances be approved based on the proposals from the Conservative group for most allowances to be increased by 7.75% (rounded up as necessary) with increased allowances for the Deputy Leader, the Leader of the largest minority group, the Chairmen of Pensions Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee and various Vice-Chairman roles and removal of the allowance for the second largest minority group leader.**

**(2) The Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 and the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral allowances for 2023/24 be submitted to Council for approval.**

**38           PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2023/24**  
Report CSD23004

The report presented the draft programme of meetings for the next Council Year (2023/24) for Members' consideration. The proposed timetable, which had been the subject of consultation, was based broadly on the current timetable, with only minor alterations. One change to the schedule was that Health and Wellbeing Board would move from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) Subject to any changes of meeting arrangements subsequently approved by Members, the programme of meetings for 2023/24 be approved.**

**(2) The Director of Corporate Services and Governance be authorised to adjust the programme in accordance with any changes made to committees by Members, and to make minor corrections and updates to the programme as necessary.**

Note: After the meeting it was proposed that the 2024 annual Council meeting and the Plans 4 meeting the next day should be moved to one week later on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in view of the arrangements for the GLA elections.

**39 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN**  
Report CSD23005

The Committee considered the appointment of former Councillors as Honorary Aldermen. Details of the Councillors recommended were set out in a part 2 appendix.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The following former Councillors be recommended to Council for appointment as Honorary Aldermen – Graham Arthur, Julian Benington, Russell Mellor, Peter Morgan, Neil Reddin, Michael Turner and Stephen Wells.**

**(2) That a special Council meeting be held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023, before the annual meeting, to appoint Honorary Aldermen.**

**40 OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS**  
Report CSD23007

The Committee was responsible for making the Council's appointments to outside bodies. Most of these appointments were annual and are made by the Committee in May each year, but some had different timescales, and, occasionally, it was necessary to make new appointments when people stand down.

The Committee considered the three nominations for the two places on the Beckenham Parochial Charities, but decided to defer making appointments.

There were no nominations for the Local Advisory Board of Nash College – Cllr Kira Gabbert suggested that she would seek a nominee from the members of the Children Education and Families PDS Committee.

**RESOLVED that appointments to the Beckenham Parochial Charities for four year terms ending in January 2027 and to the Nash College Governing Body for a three year term be deferred.**

**41 WORK PROGRAMME AND MATTERS ARISING**  
Report CSD23008

The Committee considered its work programme for 2022/23.

**RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.**

**42 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were received.

**43 LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2022, 24 OCTOBER 2022 AND 7 DECEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 24<sup>th</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were received.

**44 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.**

**The following summaries  
refer to matters involving exempt information**

**45 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN - PART 2 APPENDIX**

The Committee received details of potential candidates for appointment as Honorary Aldermen.

**46 OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENTS - PART 2 APPENDIX**

The Committee received details of potential candidates for appointment to outside bodies.

The Meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Chairman

### GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

16<sup>th</sup> February 2023

#### Questions from Members of the Public for Oral Reply

##### 1. From Gill Slater, Unite Rep

The 22/23 NJC award of £2229 for Outer London was effectively a pay cut, however, every BR grade Bromley employee was a further £1,000 worse off, the lowest grade losing out by £1,772. How does the 2% (not backdated) help staff facing 16.8% food inflation? (ONS)

##### **Reply:**

There is no requirement for Members to provide any additional increase for 22/23 having already agreed the pay award in good faith. However, Members have proposed this additional amount in response to and in recognition of the unexpected spiralling inflation post 2022/3 pay award. The Council also actively promotes the employee benefits scheme to employees which includes savings on shopping including groceries as well as local discounts.

The Council like other employers were unsighted on the sudden and unexpected rise in the inflation at the time of 22/23 pay award. However, unlike many organisations/employers Bromley Council is proposing to offer an additional 2% from 1st April 2023.

##### **Supplementary Question:**

Mrs Slater asked whether sufficient consultation had been carried out with staff - she stated that Bromley employees had fallen behind other local government workers in 2022 and the current proposals would see this "baked in." The discussions at Local Joint Consultative Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 showed the level of staff concerns about this.

##### **Reply:**

The Chairman asked the Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs to comment. His view was that all staff were aware of the proposals and there was no need for delay. The proposals should be supported in order to ensure that Bromley staff received their pay award in April, a key feature of coming out of national frameworks.

##### **Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:**

Cllr Jeal asked whether concerns had been raised about the rising cost of living by members of staff during the consultation period.

**Reply:**

The Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs confirmed that there had been a limited response from staff to the consultation. There had been concerns about financial pressures, but the majority were supportive of the proposals.

**2. From Kathy Smith, Unite Rep**

The Councils budget report indicated reserves in excess of £166m (including £18.5m not 'earmarked'). Many staff have no reserves to draw on. Since Bromley staff have fallen significantly behind other LA employees and may well again this year will Bromley set aside reserves to at least restore parity 'in year'?

**Reply:**

The 2023/24 Council Tax report to Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 highlights the need for maintaining adequate level of reserves to ensure the long term sustainability of the Council finances which helps protect key services. Although the budget is balanced for 2023/24, the Council's faces financial uncertainty in the future with significant cost pressures and a significant 'budget gap' for future years rising to £29.6m per annum from 2026/27. It is not sustainable to use one off reserves to fund additional recurring costs. Full details on the approach to reserves is provided in Appendix 4 of the 2023/24 Council Tax report.

**Supplementary Question:**

Ms Smith referred to other recent pay deals and asked whether the Council could back-date the additional award for 2022/23 and provide a flat rate £2,000 increase that would benefit the low paid most of all.

**Reply:**

The Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs responded that there was no single right approach, but, on balance, the proposals were fair and reasonable, with a slight percentage adjustment out the lower end.

**Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Nicholas Bennett:**

Cllr Nicholas Bennett asked a question about pension contributions.

**Reply:**

The Director of Human Resources, Customer Services and Public Affairs responded that employer contributions were in the region of 17-18% (the Chairman of the Pensions Committee confirmed that the rate was about 17.7%.) Cllr Bennett commented that the local government pension was far better than most schemes in the private sector.