

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 21 March 2024

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR E MCMASTER (CHAIR)

Councillors: K McCartney, J Adams, R Beadle, M Brain, L Brand, C Buckley, D Burnett, P Burns, L Caffrey, B Clelland, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, P Diston, K Dodds, C Donovan, A Douglas, P Elliott, S Gallagher, A Geddes, F Geddes, J Gibson, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, T Graham, J Green, S Green, G Haley, M Hall, S Hawkins, K Henderson, G Kasfikis, H Kelly, L Kirton, J McCoid, J McElroy, M McNestry, J Mohammed, L Moir, R Mullen, A Ord, C Ord, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, D Robson, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Turner, K Walker, D Weatherley, H Weatherley, D Welsh, A Wintcher and K Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors: V Anderson, D Bradford, D Duggan, J Eagle, M Gannon, L Green, P Maughan, B Oliphant and J Wallace

CL80 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 22 FEBRUARY 2024

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the meetings held 25th January 2024 and 22nd February 2025 to be approved as a correct record.

CL81 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no official announcements.

CL82 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

CL83 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL84 APPOINTMENTS TO THE NORTH EAST MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) That subject to the North East Mayoral Combined Authority coming into force approves the following appointments:

Constituent Council Member - Councillor Martin Gannon
Substitute Constituent Council Member - Councillor Catherine Donovan
Substitute Constituent Council Member - Councillor John Adams

CL85 CORPORATE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Considerations were given to the report to approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy as reported.

CL86 WORKFORCE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY AND STRATEGY

Considerations were given to the report seeking approval of the Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy as reported.

CL87 SENIOR OFFICER PAY FRAMEWORK

Considerations were given to the report for approval of Senior Officer pay.

Councillor Beadle requested a named vote, a total of 12 Liberal Democrats stood to vote for a named vote.

A named vote was taken and the results were: 45 Labour agreed to move the report and 12 Liberal Democrats voted against to move the report.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) Amending Senior Officer, Pay Framework as set out in the report to address the recruitment difficulties experienced.
- (ii) Approving the implementation as from 1st April 2024.
- (iii) Engaging Senior Officers affected by the proposed changes with immediate effect.
- (iv) Amending the Pay Policy to reflect the changes to the Senior Officer Framework.
- (v) Updating all interested stakeholders including Trade Unions, Senior Officers, Payroll, HR, Finance etc. on the changes to the pay framework.

CL88 LOCALISM ACT 2011 - PAY ACCOUNTABILITY PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024-25

Consideration was give to agree the revised pay policy statement as set out in the

report.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) The Pay Policy Statement 2024-25 is agreed.

CL89 HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

Consideration was given to approve the Health and Safety Strategy.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) The approval of the Health and Safety Strategy.

CL90 TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT & STRATEGY 2024/25 - 2028/29

Consideration was given to approve the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) Approval for the Treasury Policy Statement and the Treasury Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29.

CL91 INFORMATION SECURITY FRAMEWORK AND POLICY

Consideration was give to the new Information security Framework and Associated IT Security Polices and the approach to implement the new framework and associated policies.

COUNCIL RESOLVED:

- (i) Approval of the new IT Security Framework and Policy.
- (ii) Approval of the implementation of the new framework and associated policies to safeguard the Councils Information Assets and Technologies.

CL92 QUESTIONS

There were no questions received.

CL93 NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Catherine Donovan will move the following motion:

Since 2010, local government workers have lost an average of 25% from the value of their pay. Our staff are experiencing an ongoing cost of living crisis. Since 2010 the cost of living has risen by 60%, more and more local government workers have been pushed into debt, and their basic spending has overtaken their income, with 1 in 5 households having less than £100 to spare each month. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, the local government workforce has fallen by 30% as a result of job cuts. This has had a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce. Local government continues to show how indispensable it is. But staff are increasingly leaving the sector for better paid jobs elsewhere, for example in retail, leaving local authorities with a massive skills gap, and vacancies in a range of key services, including in social care, education, and youth services. Local government finance is in an enormously difficult state, facing an estimated funding gap of more than £3.5 billion for 2024/25. Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2024 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our, neighbourhoods, towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone.

This Council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of £3,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater
Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim, working with the unions to present a united front in defence of the local government workforce.

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

Proposed by: Councillor John Adams
Seconded by: Councillor Michael McNestry
Supported by: Councillor Angela Douglas
Councillor Malcolm Brain

Mayor.....