

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 25 May 2023

PRESENT: THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR D BURNETT (CHAIR)

Councillors: J Adams, V Anderson, R Beadle, P Burns, L Caffrey, P Craig, W Dick, S Dickie, P Diston, K Dodds, C Donovan, A Douglas, J Eagle, M Gannon, A Geddes, F Geddes, J Gibson, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, T Graham, L Green, S Green, M Hall, S Hawkins, H Kelly, L Kirton, K McCartney, J McCoid, J McElroy, E McMaster, M McNestry, J Mohammed, L Moir, R Mullen, B Oliphant, M Ord, I Patterson, S Potts, D Robson, S Ronchetti, J Simpson, J Turnbull, J Turner, K Walker, J Wallace, D Weatherley, H Weatherley, D Welsh and A Wintcher

APOLOGIES: Councillors: D Bradford, M Brain, C Buckley, D Duggan, S Gallagher, J Green, G Haley, P Maughan, A Ord, C Ord and K Wood

CL9 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 23 MARCH AND 19 MAY 2023

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2023 and 19 May 2023 be approved as correct records.

CL10 OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) Welcome to Deputy Mayor

Following the election of Councillor K McCartney at Annual Council meeting, Councillor McCartney signed the Declaration of Office.

(B) Appointments

The following nominations were received from the Labour Group;

- Strategic Housing Board – Councillor M Hall
- Corporate Resources OSC – Councillor D Weatherley to replace Councillor W Dick
- Pensions Committee – South Tyneside MBC – Councillor H Kelly to replace Councillor B Goldsworthy

CL11 PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

CL12 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

CL13 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the Information Governance Framework and Data Protection Policy for implementation across the Council.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Information Governance Framework and the Data Protection Policy be approved and implemented without delay.

CL14 HOUSING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the changes to the procedure for dealing with housing complaints.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the change in the housing complaints procedure from a 3-stage process to a 2-stage process be approved.

CL15 GATESHEAD EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2023 TO 2026

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of the partnership Early Help Strategy for Gateshead 2023-26.

COUNCIL RESOLVED - That the Gateshead Early Help Strategy 2023-2026 be approved.

CL16 NOTICE OF MOTION - PAY RISE FOR COUNCIL AND SCHOOL WORKERS

Councillor J Adams moved the following motion:

“This Council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. Councils across England are now facing a collective funding gap of £2.4bn for the financial year 2023/24 and a cumulative funding gap of £4.08bn for 2024/25 according to UNISON research.

Councils led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown

more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster. Recent funding announcements from the Government relating to schools did nothing to help.

Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with inflation hitting 10% and many having to make impossible choices between food, heating and other essentials. 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, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2023 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 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 and who were not offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 RPI + two per cent funded by central government

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim

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 discuss for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can engage with the campaign

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.”

Councillor R Beadle moved the following amendment;

“REPLACE the words ‘Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State’ with the words ‘Write to the Chancellor, Shadow Chancellor, Secretary of State and Shadow Secretary of State’.”

On the amendment being put it was defeated.

The substantive motion was duly carried.

COUNCIL RESOLVED -

“This Council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. Councils across England are now facing a collective funding gap of £2.4bn for the financial year 2023/24 and a cumulative funding gap of £4.08bn for 2024/25 according to UNISON research.

Councils led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster. Recent funding announcements from the Government relating to schools did nothing to help.

Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with inflation hitting 10% and many having to make impossible choices between food, heating and other essentials. 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, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2023 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 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 and who were not offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 RPI + two per cent funded by central government

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim

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 discuss for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can engage with the campaign

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.”

CL17 QUESTIONS

There were no questions received.

Mayor.....