

## Notice of Meeting

# General Purposes Committee

**Date:** Thursday 26 May 2022

**Time:** 5.30 pm

**Venue:** Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover,  
Hampshire, SP10 3AJ

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**Legal and Democratic Service**

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The recommendations contained in the Agenda are made by the Officers and these recommendations may or may not be accepted by the Committee.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEME**

*If members of the public wish to address the meeting they should notify the Legal and Democratic Service at the Council's Beech Hurst office by noon on the working day before the meeting.*

### **Membership of General Purposes Committee**

#### **MEMBER**

#### **WARD**

Councillor K Hamilton (Chairman)

Andover Harroway

Councillor K North (Vice-Chairman)

Andover Romans

Councillor N Adams-King

Blackwater

Councillor D Baverstock

Romsey Cupernham

Councillor J Burnage

Romsey Cupernham

Councillor C Donnelly

Andover Downlands

Councillor A Dowden

Valley Park

Councillor M Flood

Anna

Councillor R Meyer

Andover Winton

Councillor P North

Bourne Valley

Councillor T Swain

Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams

## **General Purposes Committee**

Thursday 26 May 2022

### **AGENDA**

**The order of these items may change as a result of members  
of the public wishing to speak**

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 Public Participation**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Urgent Items**
- 5 Interim Staff Pay Award for 2022/23** **4 - 12**  
  
To consider the staff pay award for 2022/23.
- 6 Appointment of General Purposes Sub-Committees** **13 - 14**  
  
To appoint Sub-Committees to deal with appeals and ethic matters.

## ITEM 5 Interim Staff Pay Award for 2022/23

Report of the Chief Executive

### Recommended:

**That an interim pay award of 2% be made to all staff with effect from 1 April 2022 with the exception of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.**

#### SUMMARY:

- The report starts the process of addressing the pay claim submitted by the trade unions for the year 2022/23.
- The Council's approved budget for 2022/23 contains provision for a potential pay award.
- The current cost of living pressures mean that a slightly different approach is recommended for the cost of living pay award for 2022/23. In response to the current situation, an interim pay award of 2% with effect from 1 April 2022 is being recommended to provide some immediate assistance whilst the picture regarding the national settlement becomes clearer.
- The recommendation is for this interim award to be made to all staff save for the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.

### 1 Introduction - The Union Pay Claim

- 1.1 Around this time of year we normally enter into negotiations with the Unions about the annual pay award.
- 1.2 The UNISON, Unite and GMB trade unions have submitted the pay claim set out in the Annex on behalf of their members.
- 1.3 The claim suggests a "*package of measures that appropriately reward staff for dealing with increasing workloads and pressure over the previous year, particularly in light of Covid-19 and the additional demands that have arisen.*" In particular it asks for "*a substantial above-inflation (RPI) pay rise of 10% to help restore and maintain employees' living standards*".

### 2 Information for Members to consider in relation to the pay claim

- 2.1 Whilst we will enter into pay negotiations with the unions over forthcoming months, we are acutely aware that it is a complex and volatile picture in economic terms, both from a national and international perspective. At the same time it is appreciated that TVBC staff are faced with increasing costs in their personal lives. This is balanced with the Council's responsibility to protect services and jobs in difficult financial times.

- 2.2 Members will recall that the Committee recently approved the removal of Grade 1/2 from the Council's pay scales, making Grade 3 the lowest grade. This benefited the Council's lowest paid employees. It has created a gap between the Council's lowest pay point of £10.43, and the national living wage (previously national minimum wage) of £9.50 for those age 23 and over and the living foundation living wage of £9.90 per hour.
- 2.3 As a result Cabinet members have indicated that they are keen to make sure that for this year we are guided by the national pay negotiations to ensure that TVBC staff do not lose out, whilst at the same time staying within a sustainable financial envelope.
- 2.4 The main point to note with this approach is that, bearing in mind experiences last year, the national award is likely to take many months to conclude. Members will recall that Council employees working for authorities on national conditions of service had to wait until March 2022 to receive their annual pay increase for 2021/22. TVBC employees received theirs in June 2021.
- 2.5 As a result it is proposed that an interim 2% pay award is paid to all employees with effect from 1 April 2022. If this proposal is approved, TVBC staff will receive the increase in their pay in the June payroll (backdated to 1 April 2022). This proposed interim award will ensure that TVBC staff receive a timely uplift to help with some of their increased household costs and at the same time allow the authority to have regard to the provisions of the final national award. Officers will enter into negotiations with the unions over the coming months about the final pay award as the national picture emerges.
- 2.6 The proposal for a 2% interim award does not include the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive at this stage so as to not fetter any future proposals for a tapering differential pay award across the pay grades.

### **3 Inflation**

- 3.1 The change in CPIH (Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs) over the 12 months to April 2022 is 7.8%. The largest contribution in the 12 month inflation rate is from housing and household services, in particular electricity, gas and other fuels and transport and motor fuel costs. The House of Commons research briefing on rising costs of living in the UK, 14 April 2022, reported 85% of adults in the UK reported an increase in their cost of living. In the year to March, domestic gas has increased by 28%, electricity by 19%. The regulator Ofgem increased the domestic energy price cap by 54% in April and there is suggestion it could increase again by 40-50% when revised in October 2022. Low income households spend a larger proportion of their income on energy and food costs and therefore will be more affected by the price increases.

#### **4 Changes in Taxes and Government Support**

- 4.1 Changes have and are being made in 2022/3 to personal taxes. Taxes were increased by 1.25% point rise in April in national insurance contributions and income tax thresholds were frozen. The threshold at which national insurance contributions begin to be charged on earnings is increasing in July. The net outcome of the changes will mean those earning less than £25,000 will pay less in income tax and national insurance and those earning more than £25,000 will pay more.
- 4.2 Benefits increased in April 2022 by less than the current/or expected level of inflation and this will put pressure on households relying on these payments.
- 4.3 Government support is available in relation to rising energy prices, including a £200 energy bills discount (repayable over 5 years) and a £150 council tax rebate for those in a band A-D property.

#### **5 Corporate Objectives and Priorities**

- 5.1 The issues of being a high performing council, motivating and valuing staff and competitiveness in the market place relate directly to the Council's Vision *to be an organisation of excellence* committed to improving the quality of life of all the people of Test Valley.

#### **6 Consultations/Communications**

- 6.1 The matter has been the subject of consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee and Portfolio Holders. In addition the unions have been informed of this interim proposal. We understand that UNISON have sought their members views on the proposal. These will be reported to the committee if received in time.

#### **7 Options and Option Appraisal**

- 7.1 The options available to members at this stage are either to pay the 2% interim award or not.
- 7.2 The interim award will help TVBC staff deal with some of the current household inflationary pressures. It is a complex picture this year with inflationary pressures felt by all employees, not just those on lower pay grades.
- 7.3 Changes to taxes and government support is available to support those earning less than £25,000 and living in band A-D council tax property.
- 7.4 Those earning above £25,000 will see less in their pay packet because of additional taxes exacerbating the increases in inflation. This impacts roles from Grade 6 upwards and includes our professional officers.
- 7.5 The Council will wish to take the whole picture into consideration in continuing discussions with the Unions on a final proposal for this year.

## 8 Budget Considerations

- 8.1 The 2022/23 budget made provision for a 2.0% pay award in the salary budgets at a cost of approximately £390,000. The budget was set in the context of increasing Council Tax by the maximum amount permitted, uncertainty related to some key income streams affected by the pandemic and a continuation of one-year settlements from central government that prevent reliable medium-term financial planning.
- 8.2 In order to set a balanced budget it was necessary to draw from reserves to mitigate those areas identified above. Accordingly, the amount budgeted for a cost of living pay award was set in the overall context of an affordable award given the Council's overall financial position.

## 9 Risk Management

- 9.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's Risk management process and the existing risk controls in place mean that no significant risks (Red or Amber) have been identified.

## 10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 None

## 11 Equality Issues

- 11.1 The recommendation in this report is made to help all TVBC employees (save for the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive) in these challenging economic times.

## 12 Conclusion

- 12.1 The proposals contained in this report are a pragmatic response to the current macro-economic uncertainty whilst seeking to ensure financial prudence.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1		
Author:	Alex Rowland	Ext:	8251
File Ref:	N/A		
Report to:	General Purposes Committee	Date:	26 May 2022



## LOCAL PAY CLAIM 2022

### INTRODUCTION

This pay claim is submitted jointly by GMB, UNISON and UNITE on behalf of our members employed by Test Valley Borough Council.

Our claim is for the following:

- A package of measures that appropriately reward staff for dealing with increasing workloads and pressure over the previous year, particularly in light of Covid-19 and the additional demands that have arisen
- A substantial above-inflation (RPI) pay rise of 10% to help restore and maintain employees' living standards
- A commitment to review the Council's other pay and allowances, with a view to introducing suitable increases to recognise the additional pressures being faced by staff in key areas.
- A one day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement
- A two hour reduction in the standard working week
- Improvements to family leave and caring arrangements

GMB, UNISON and UNITE are therefore submitting the following claim for 2022, which seeks to improve and enhance the morale and productivity of our members. Meeting our claim will give TVBC the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to creating a workforce which is well paid and high in morale and productivity, as well as rewarding them for the efforts they have already made.

### 1. BACKGROUND TO THE CLAIM

The council will be aware that the latest inflation figures for February 2022 show that Gas has risen by 28.8%, Electricity by 19.2%, children's clothes by 12.3% and housing by 9%. As a result, the Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation figure stands at 8.2%. A substantial pay increase will therefore not only help restore and maintain living standards of staff who have seen their real pay eroded over the years, but will also address the cost of living crisis that they now face.

For example, surveys of our membership show that over 82% claim they are worse off in 2022 than the year before. Over 66% rely on getting On Call payments to



increase their take home pay, whilst over 22% need to claim state benefits to supplement their income.

Nevertheless, the greatest asset of TVBC is its employees. In this pay round, our members are looking for evidence of the value that TVBC places upon them and a recognition of the work they have been doing and the value that they bring to the authority, particularly in light of what they have done during the Covid pandemic.

This claim is therefore both realistic and fair, and GMB, UNISON and UNITE hope that TVBC will give it the full consideration and response which employees expect and richly deserve.

## 2. THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The unprecedented period which the UK and the world has experienced for the last two years has raised a number of fundamental questions about the way in which our society and economy are structured. The public displays of support for frontline and key workers show the value that we place on the staff that are carrying out these essential duties, including many local government workers who have continued to provide much needed services and support to local residents and the wider community throughout the pandemic.

What is of concern to us is that some staff do not feel they have been supported during this time. Our surveys revealed that over 37% felt they had not see any noticeable support enough during the Covid crisis, including 3% who said they'd had no support at all. When asked if TVBC should reward staff for the efforts they have made during this period, the response was 'Yes' from over 56%. Given this, it would be unthinkable for the authority not to make a reasonable pay award this year.

## 3. FALLING VALUE OF PAY

The table below demonstrates how overall, salary increases at TVBC over the last ten years have not kept pace with inflation and the cost of living:

	TVBC pay increases	Rise in cost of living <sup>1</sup> (as measured by Retail Prices Index)
2013	1% subject a minimum increase of £250	3.0%
2014	2.5%	2.4%
2015	2.5%	1.0%
2016	2.5%	1.8%
2017	2.5%	3.6%
2018	2.5%	3.3%
2019	4% up to Grade 6 and 2.5% for Grade 7 and above	2.4%
2020	2.75%	1.6%

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, Consumer Price Inflation Reference Tables, March 2018 and <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/07/Pay-claims.pdf>

2021	1.75% up to Grade 6 and 1.5% for Grade 7 and above	4.8%
2022	TBC	8.2%

As part of the Spring Statement on 23 March 2022, the Office for Budget Responsibility revealed that UK households have experienced a 2.2% fall in living standards – the highest since the 1950s. Inflation is now climbing towards 10%, energy bills are due to rise in both April by 50% and October by a further 40%, prices at the petrol pump continue to be volatile and thresholds for National Insurance and Income Tax personal allowances are being frozen. Increases in council tax and food prices are also having an impact on real incomes and spending power.

#### **4. A NEW STANDARD MINIMUM PAY BENCHMARK**

We acknowledge the council's stated intention of creating a new Grade 3 and abolishing Grades 1 and 2 in order to address the issue of pay rates at the lower end of the scale being barely above the new National Living Wage after April.

We are also aware that TVBC currently has 19 permanent staff, 8 apprentices and 15 casual staff on less than £10 an hour. Establishing a minimum hourly rate well above this point would therefore enable TVBC to build in some headroom now and avoid skirting a new legal minimum wage in the future. However, by abolishing Grades 1 and 2, the council has created further complications around the issue of pay differentials – which will also need to be addressed.

As an authority, there is also good reason to call on the Government to fund an increase in local government pay. Analysis by the IPPR found that 43% of the cost of raising public sector pay would be returned to the Treasury through taxation and lower social security costs.<sup>2</sup> The macro-economic benefits of moving to two-thirds of average earnings, in terms of generating employment through the multiplier effect and increased government revenue, have been set out in a report commissioned by UNISON as evidence to the Low Pay Commission.<sup>3</sup>

#### **5. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PRESSURES BUILDING**

The latest analysis from the LGA shows that average vacancy rates appear to have risen in the last year, but there has been little change in turnover. It is possible that vacancy rates reflect the availability of jobs in other sectors, especially as recruitment and retention difficulties remain high for many councils.

TVBC's turnover figure is certainly starting to rise, from 3.2% in the first quarter of 2021/22 to 6.28% in the third quarter. One key areas that local authorities therefore need to consider are the incentives and career opportunities available, as well as flexible working and the quality of job design to support and nurture employees. This has been an important aspect of the recent home working situation brought about by Covid.

However, it remains that pay is one of the crucial determining factors that affect recruitment and retention. Findings from our membership surveys show that 36% of

<sup>2</sup> IPPR, Uncapped Potential: The Fiscal and Economic Impact of Lifting the Public Sector Pay Cap, November 2017, <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-11/uncapped-potential-november2017.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/06/Supplementary-Evidence-2019-Landman-Economics-Report.pdf>

staff have seriously considered leaving the council in the last 12 months, with a further 32% having also considered the option. Even more worrying is that these results include many staff with over 20 years' service. This should therefore be a concern to the council and its elected members.

## **6. MORALE UNDER THREAT**

Working against a background of budget cuts and the Covid pandemic, staff have been facing greater workload pressures. The resulting increased stress puts the morale of the workforce at risk and poses a long term threat to TVBC's ability to provide a consistent quality of service. Our surveys found:

- Over 64.5% say their workload has increased in the last year compared to pre-Covid levels
- Over 63.5% say stress levels have increased
- Staff are finding it increasingly difficult to balance their work and domestic commitments, both prior to as well as during Covid-19

These are serious concerns that TVBC need to address. One of the first steps towards doing this would of course be to introduce a meaningful pay award in 2022.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Our members are acutely aware of the council's financial challenges, including those which have arisen due to the Covid pandemic. However, they are also aware of the economic realities that they currently face and the importance of maintaining confidence between the council and its staff.

Investment in the workforce is often seen as distinct from investment in better public services. However, there's a clear link between decent pay and conditions and quality services - services that are responsive, reliable, consistent, caring and accessible. Continued improvement depends on decent pay, conditions and staff training and development. In many cases, the service *is* the staff.

The rewards employers will reap in return for investment in the well-being of their employees cannot be underestimated. An employer offering a pay cut in real terms, on top of cuts in the last ten years, will ultimately struggle to retain or attract the existing and new skilled people it needs for the future.

There can be no doubt that all employees working for TVBC have seen a fall in their living standards over time. Yet to deliver a quality service, the authority relies on its workforce, and the retention of a specialist, skilled, experienced and dedicated staff is important to the quality of service delivery.

In this pay round, TVBC can further demonstrate that its workforce is properly and adequately recognised and valued. This is a fair and realistic claim which we are happy to consult over in order to explain how the council can and should meet it in full.

## **ITEM 6 Appointment of General Purposes Sub-Committees**

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

### **Recommended:**

- 1. That a Redundancy Appeals Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee be established comprising four members to deal with redundancy appeals and that Councillors xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, and xxxx be appointed to the Sub-Committee.**
- 2. That an Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee be established comprising five members to deal with all other appeals to members by staff relating to employment matters (save for redundancy matters) as well as matters of an ethical nature concerning Members as delegated on 25 July 2012 and that Councillors xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, xxxx, and xxxx be appointed to the Sub-Committee.**

### **SUMMARY:**

- To establish General Purposes Sub-Committees to deal with appeals and ethics matters.

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 It is necessary to establish Sub-Committees of the General Purposes Committee to deal with a range of duties as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 This report invites General Purposes to appoint Members to the Sub-Committees reflecting political proportionality for this purpose.
- 1.3 Part of the role of these Sub-Committees is to hear appeals. The Dispute Resolution Regulations 2004 and other legalisation introduce statutory discipline and dismissal procedures which, inter-alia, extends the right of appeal to employees whose posts have been made redundant or dismissed.
- 1.4 Whilst the Cabinet makes decisions on redundancies, some members of the Cabinet are also members of the General Purposes Committee. It would not therefore be appropriate for those members to hear appeals against redundancy.
- 1.5 The Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee will be able to hear any type of appeal other than those against redundancy.

## 2 Options and Option Appraisal

Option 1 – to not appoint to the Sub-Committees

- 2.1 If the Sub-Committees were not appointed to then the necessary powers and duties of the General Purpose Committee and its Sub-Communities would not be able to be fulfilled.

Option 2 – to appoint to the Member Panel.

- 2.2 This is the recommended option.

Appointing Members to the Sub-Committees to reflect political proportionality of the Council, replicates the historic position of appointments to the Sub-Committees and follows the principles applied when making appointments to ordinary committees at Annual Council. Appointing to the Sub-Committees will ensure that they are able to fulfil their powers and duties as set out in the Constitution should they be required to do so.

## 3 Conclusion

- 3.1 It is necessary to establish Sub-Committees of the General Purposes Committee to deal with a range of duties as set out in the Council's Constitution. It is proposed that the Sub-Committees are appointed to as set out in the recommendations to this report.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Democracy and Governance) Councillor I Jeffrey			
Officer:	Karen Dunn	Extension:	8401
Report to:	General Purposes Committee	Date:	26 May 2022