

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 8 March 2023 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Tom Munro in the Chair

Councillors Rita Turner (Vice-Chair), Derek Adams, Allan Bailey, Rose Bowler, Anne Clarke, Nick Clarke, David Dixon, Maxine Dixon, Mary Dooley, David Downes, Steve Fritchley, Ray Heffer, Hinman, Andrew Joesbury, Chris Kane, Tom Kirkham, Duncan McGregor, Clive Moesby, Evonne Parkin, Graham Parkin, Sandra Peake, Liz Smyth, Janet Tait, Deborah Watson and Jen Wilson.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Assistant Director and Monitoring Officer), Pam Brown (Assistant Director – Leader's Executive, Partnerships, Governance and Communications), and Amy Bryan (Governance and Civic Manager).

CL86-22/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Jane Bryson, Dexter Bullock, Tracey Cannon, Tricia Clough, Donna Hales and Peter Roberts.

CL87-22/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer stated that any Councillor who was a resident of the District was likely to have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 6 – Level of Council Tax 2023/24 but that there was an automatic dispensation to remain in the meeting and speak and vote on the item. All Councillors present declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the Item.

CL88-22/23 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reported that he had recently presented a cheque for £1,500 to Freedom Community Project, which would help support the continuation of warm hubs across the entire District. The Chair had also presented a cheque for £3,500 to Ashgate Hospice Care, where he had toured the facility and learned of the outreach work the charity was undertaking.

The Chair was thanked for the help and support he had given to SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

CL89-22/23 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Ray Heffer and seconded by Councillor Derek Adams

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RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of Council held on 1st February 2023 be approved as a true and correct record.

CL90-22/23 MOTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Councillors were able to submit Motions on Notice for consideration at meetings of Council.

a) The following Motion was submitted for consideration by Councillor Steve Fritchley:

Further to the Motion agreed at Council on 30 November 2016 -

That this Council notes that:

- *The TUC's Dying to Work Campaign seeks to have terminal illness recognised as a 'protected characteristic' so that an employee with a terminal illness would enjoy a protected period where they could not be dismissed as a result of their condition.*
- *The Dying to Work Charter states the following:*
 - *We recognise that terminal illness requires support and understanding and not additional and avoidable stress and worry*
 - *Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that, safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic itself*
 - *We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period with the dignity and without undue financial loss*
 - *We support the TUC's Dying to Work campaign so that all employees battling terminal illness have adequate employment protection and have their death in service benefits protected for the loved ones they leave behind.*

This Council resolves to:

- *Support the TUC's Dying to Work Campaign calling for terminal illness to be made a protected characteristic.*
- *Commit to signing up to the TUC's Dying to Work Charter.*

The Motion was moved by Councillor Steve Fritchley and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake. Both Councillors spoke to the Motion and emphasised the need to be a compassionate employer and how important it was to both employees and their families.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED that this Council notes that:

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- The TUC's Dying to Work Campaign seeks to have terminal illness recognised as a 'protected characteristic' so that an employee with a terminal illness would enjoy a protected period where they could not be dismissed as a result of their condition.
- The Dying to Work Charter states the following:
 - We recognise that terminal illness requires support and understanding and not additional and avoidable stress and worry
 - Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that, safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic itself
 - We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period with the dignity and without undue financial loss
 - We support the TUC's Dying to Work campaign so that all employees battling terminal illness have adequate employment protection and have their death in service benefits protected for the loved ones they leave behind.

This Council resolves to:

- Support the TUC's Dying to Work Campaign calling for terminal illness to be made a protected characteristic.
- Commit to signing up to the TUC's Dying to Work Charter.

b) The following motion was submitted for consideration by Councillor Duncan McGregor:

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

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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 + 2%.

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 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.

The motion was moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Steve Fritchley.

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On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

RESOLVED that 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.

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This council resolves to:

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Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

CL91-22/23 LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that any Member in arrears of Council Tax of more than 2 months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applied to them. A failure to comply with these requirements was a criminal offence under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Councillor Clive Moesby, Portfolio Holder for Finance, presented the report, which set out the proposed level of Council Tax for 2023/24.

The Chair reminded Members that a recorded vote would need to be taken as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor

For: 26 (Councillors Derek Adams, Allan Bailey, Rose Bowler, Anne Clarke, Nick Clarke, David Dixon, Maxine Dixon, Mary Dooley, David Downes, Steve Fritchley, Ray Heffer, Mark Hinman, Andrew Joesbury, Chris Kane, Tom Kirkham, Duncan McGregor, Clive Moesby, Tom Munro, Evonne Parkin, Graham Parkin, Sandra Peake, Liz Smyth, Janet Tait, Rita Turner, Deborah Watson, Jen Wilson)

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

RESOLVED that (1) the Council Tax for the financial year 2023/24 as set out in the report, be approved,

(2) That the persons named below are hereby authorised in accordance with Section 223

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of the Local Government Act 1972 to:

- a) Collect and recover any Council Tax due to the Council
- b) Prosecute and appear on behalf of the Council at the hearing of any legal proceedings by way of an application for the issue of a liability order or warrant for the issue of a liability order or warrant of commitment in respect of unpaid Council Tax
- c) Collect and recover any Community Charges and National Non-Domestic Rates due to the Council
- d) Prosecute and appear on behalf of the Council at the hearing of any legal proceedings by way of an application for the issue of a liability order or warrant of commitment in respect of unpaid National-Non Domestic Rates
- e) Prosecute and appear on behalf of the Council at the hearing of any legal proceedings by way of an application for the issue of a distress warrant of commitment in respect of unpaid rates of Section 97, 102 and 103 respectively of the General Rates Act 1967

Mrs M Whetton	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Mrs J Lyons	Senior Court Officer
Mrs VJ Warhurst	Senior Revenues Officer
Mrs A Bowman	Senior Revenues Officer
Mrs P Bates	Senior Revenues Officer
Miss G Jackson	Senior Revenues Officer

Given that the officers performing this role may change during the course of the financial year, delegated authority be given to the Council's Chief Financial Officer to authorise any amendments to the list of named officers that may prove necessary during the course of the financial year.

(Section 151 Officer)

CL92-22/23 AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - 2021/22

Council considered a report in relation to the Auditor's Annual Report in respect of 2021/22. The report had been prepared by Mazars, the Council's External Auditor.

Both the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Chair of the Audit and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee expressed their gratitude to the Finance Team for their continued hard work and welcomed such a great report.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the annual report from the Council's External Auditor, Mazars, be noted.

CL93-22/23 ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT - 2023/24

Councillor Duncan McGregor presented the Annual Pay Policy Statement report. The pay policy statement set out the Council's policy on pay for senior managers and employees in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and Supplementary Guidance 2013.

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Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Steve Fritchley
RESOLVED that the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 be approved.

(HR & Payroll Manager)

CL94-22/23 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE - 2023/24

Council considered a report which proposed a calendar of meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year. The report set out any notable differences to 2022/23 and the draft calendar of meetings was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Ray Heffer
RESOLVED that (1) the 2023/24 calendar of meetings, as attached to the report at Appendix 1, be approved

(2) delegated authority be given to the Governance and Civic Manager, following consultation with the Chair of the relevant Committee(s)/Working Group(s) to amend the calendar of meetings 2023/24 as and when required.

(Governance and Civic Manager)

CL95-22/23 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair stated that the meeting had been the last scheduled Council meeting of the municipal year and thanked Members for their conduct and input during the year. He gave his best wishes to all those standing and not standing in the forthcoming local elections.

The meeting concluded at 10:37 hours.