

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Procurement Committee held at 4.00 pm
on Tuesday, 30 August 2022

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lakha (Chair)
Councillor S Agboola
Councillor M Ali
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor A Hopkins (Substitute for Councillor B Singh)
Councillor J Lepoidevin (Substitute for Councillor J Blundell)

Employees (by Directorate):

Communications N Hart

Finance P Helm (Finance Manager), K Tyler (Chief Internal Auditor)

Human Resources S Newing (Chief People Officer)

Law and Governance J Newman (Chief Legal Officer), A West

Streetscene and Regulatory Services A Walster (Director)

Apologies: Councillor J Blundell
Councillor B Singh
Councillor T Sawdon

Public Business

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

24. Exclusion of Press and Public

The Committee discussed the basis for excluding the press and public for the consideration of the private report and sought assurance about how the requirements of data protection legislation were applied to protect individuals and balanced with the need for transparency in decision-making.

RESOLVED that the Audit and Procurement Committee agrees to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private reports in Minute 27 below headed ‘Consideration of Approval of Severance Package’, on the grounds that the item involves the likely disclosure of information defined in Paragraph 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as its contains information relating to

individuals, the financial and business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information relating to labour relations matters and that, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

25. Consideration of Approval of Severance Package

The Audit and Procurement Committee considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services which indicated that, as a result of the Waste Industrial dispute, the City Council's Commercial Waste Operation has suffered permanent income loss of £2m per annum income. In order to reduce the ongoing cost burden to the City Council following this fall in income, it has been necessary to offer a package of Voluntary Redundancies and/or Early Retirement to some waste services staff.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential matters relating to this matter was also submitted for consideration (Minute 27 below refers).

Members of the Committee questioned officers and received responses about:

- The financial pressures on the Commercial Waste Service and the need to reduce the number of employees to reflect the reduced income to the service
- The application of the Council's Voluntary Redundancy / Early Retirement scheme
- Clarity about the role of the Audit and Procurement Committee in the decision-making process in the context of employment law and the legislative requirements relating to decision-making when the total cost of a severance package to a local authority exceeds £100,000.

RESOLVED that the Audit and Procurement Committee notes the report.

26. Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business

There were no other items of urgent public business.

27. Consideration of Approval of Severance Package

Further to Minute 25 above, the Audit and Procurement Committee considered a report of the Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services that sought approval of a severance package for one employee of the Council which exceeded £100,000 and had occurred due to the permanent income loss of £2m per annum for the Council's Commercial Waste Operation, following the Waste Industrial dispute. To reduce this fall in income, it had been necessary to offer a package of Voluntary Redundancies and/or Early Retirement to some waste service staff.

Part 21 of the Council's constitution required that any severance package for an employee of the Council of £100,000 or over should be determined by the Audit and Procurement Committee. The calculation of the value of an exit packages included the costs to the Authority, as well as payments / benefits to the employees.

Members of the Committee questioned officers and received responses about:

- The application of the Council's Voluntary Redundancy / Early Retirement scheme within the service area and other options available
- The calculation of severance packages which are made up of redundancy pay in line with the nationally agreed formula (to which no local enhancements are added and is the only element which the employee receives) and pension strain.
- How the reduction in the number of posts reduces the costs of salaries and pension contributions to the authority and contributes to financial savings which offset the loss of income.

RESOLVED that the Audit and Procurement Committee approves the severance package as calculated in the report submitted.

28. **Any Other Items of Urgent Private Business**

There were no items of urgent private business.

(Meeting closed at 4.40 pm)