

Public Document Pack

Democratic Services



STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 14 November 2023 at 7.30 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

Online access to this meeting is available on YouTube: [Link to online broadcast](#)

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair)
Councillor Hannah Dalton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Chris Ames
Councillor Shanice Goldman

Councillor Graham Jones
Councillor Alison Kelly
Councillor Robert Leach
Councillor Alan Williamson

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

For further information, please contact democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or tel: 01372 732000

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

No emergency drill is planned to take place during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Public information

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Epsom and will be available to observe live using free YouTube software.

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda. A limited number of seats will be available on a first-come first-served basis in the public gallery at the Town Hall. If you wish to observe the meeting from the public gallery, please arrive at the Town Hall reception before the start of the meeting. A member of staff will show you to the seating area. For further information please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the [Council's website](#). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for this Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Exclusion of the Press and the Public

There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chair agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee may wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions and statements from the Public

Up to 30 minutes will be set aside for questions and statements from members of the public at meetings of this Committee. Any member of the public who lives, works, attends an educational establishment or owns or leases land in the Borough may ask a question or make a statement on matters within the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

All questions must consist of one question only and cannot consist of multiple parts. Questions and statements cannot relate to planning or licensing committees matters, the personal affairs of an individual, or a matter which is exempt from disclosure or confidential under the Local Government Act 1972. Questions which in the view of the Chair are defamatory, offensive, vexatious or frivolous will not be accepted. Each question or statement will be limited to 3 minutes in length.

If you wish to ask a question or make a statement at a meeting of this Committee, please contact Democratic Services at: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Questions must be received in writing by Democratic Services by noon on the third working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Thursday 9 November**.

A summary of statements must be received by Democratic Services by noon on the working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, Monday 13 November**.

For more information on public speaking protocol at Committees, please see [Annex 4.2](#) of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Operating Framework.

Filming and recording of meetings

The Council allows filming, recording and photography at its public meetings. By entering the Council Chamber and using the public gallery, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

Members of the Press who wish to film, record or photograph a public meeting should contact the Council's Communications team prior to the meeting by email at: communications@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non-handheld devices, including tripods, will not be allowed.

AGENDA

1. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

To take any questions or statements from members of the Public.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 12)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a true record the Minutes and Restricted Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 September 2023 (attached) and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW (To Follow)

5. CONFERRING THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN (Pages 13 - 16)

The report invites the Committee to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman.

6. STAFF PAY AWARD (Pages 17 - 22)

This report provides information and options for the committee to make a recommendation to Council for a staff pay award for 2024/25.

7. URGENT DECISIONS (Pages 23 - 26)

To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution.

8. RESOURCES (To Follow)

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 21 September 2023

PRESENT -

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair); Councillor Hannah Dalton (Vice-Chair); Councillors Chris Ames, Shanice Goldman, Graham Jones, Alison Kelly, Robert Leach and Alan Williamson

In Attendance: Councillor Steven McCormick

Officers present: Andrew Bircher (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Chris Anderson (Head of IT), Brendan Bradley (Head of Finance), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

10 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 13 July 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

13 IT STRATEGY

The Committee received a report providing details of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Information Technology Strategy for 2023 and beyond. The IT Strategy defined the principles, governance, standards and methodology by which the council will source, procure, implement, maintain and deliver IT services both internally (to staff and partners) and externally (to residents). The report also detailed the IT Roadmap for 2023-2027.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Contribution to carbon reduction target.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Head of IT informed the Committee that a number of

metrics could be included in a procurement activity to gauge its contribution to the council's carbon reduction target. This included the power usage effectiveness rating of cloud based services. Officers were considering which metrics would be appropriate to include and whether a weighting should be applied to them. The Committee noted that suppliers using green energy might have a higher cost as a result, and officers would need to consider how to equate this increased financial cost to the council's carbon reduction target.

- b) Re-use and disposal of equipment.** The Head of IT informed the Committee that he was happy to receive proposals from councillors for the reuse of redundant equipment.
- c) Training and support for officers.** The Head of IT informed the Committee that the Council had access to a training suite as a part of its Microsoft Enterprise agreement and that this would be used to support a learning plan for individual staff. There would also be a wider training programme for all staff to support the roll-out of SharePoint and Microsoft 365.
- d) Issues to be considered by channel shift.** A member of the Committee expressed the view that footnote 2 on page 27 of the agenda should be expanded to consider a wider set of issues, such as matters addressed by the Equalities Act. It was noted that the Head of IT would take this forward.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Agree the IT Strategy, and the associated plan to invest in a programme of works as set out in the IT Roadmap.**
- (2) Note that the works to include; a refresh of end user devices for officers, a programme of works to update infrastructure and move to a hosted data centre and transformational projects to improve and increase online services to residents.**
- (3) Approve the indicative funding implications for delivering the defined IT Roadmap in 2023-2027, as set out in section 5 of the report, which will feed into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to be approved at Full Council in February 2024.**
- (4) Agree that a further report on the IT Roadmap will be submitted to committee in September 2024. This will provide an update on the implementation of the roadmap and details of funding actuals to date and forecast.**

14 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2023/24

The Committee received a report setting out that central government had introduced a further tranche of the Household Support Fund (HSF4) for 2023/24.

Funding for the scheme had been provided to Surrey County Council (SCC), who has overall control and responsibility for administering HSF.

SCC had passed a proportion of the funding to Surrey districts for distribution on to residents.

To assist in delivering the funds to hard-to-reach local residents, EEBC had already entered into a partnership with the Good Company, a local charity who run the local food bank, Epsom Pantry and the Epsom Refugees Network.

The report proposed to continue the partnership with the Good Company, to enable these funds to continue to be disbursed to vulnerable residents, in a timely manner, whom the Council would otherwise be unable to reach.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved with 6 votes for, 1 abstention and the Chair not voting to:

- (1) **Agree that a further £50,000 of the HSF4 allocation be passed to the Good Company, for distribution to residents in the period October 2023 to March 2024.**

15 POOLE ROAD PAVILION REROOFING PROJECT

The Committee received a report requesting additional capital funding to carry out the replacement of the roof covering to the pavilion and provide additional insulation.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Variance between manufacturer's estimate and tendered prices.** Members of the committee queried why the tendered prices for this work were significantly higher than that estimated by the manufacturer, and why they were within a small range of variance. In response the Senior Surveyor informed the Committee that the general market trait at present was that the price of tenders had increased due to high energy and transportation costs. The Senior Surveyor informed the Committee that in this specific case, the manufacturer's estimate provided to the Council had been too low, which had led to the tenders being above the anticipated cost. The Senior Surveyor also informed the Committee that for the majority of projects, tenders were received below the initial estimate.
- b) **Audit requirements.** In response to a question from a member of the Committee, the Head of Finance informed the Committee that he was confident that the auditor would not have issue with the regard to the works as long as it was properly approved by the Committee. The Head of Finance informed the Committee that this item had been presented to it for consideration due to the material change in the cost of the works, to enable the Committee to consider whether it wished to progress with the scheme, and to ensure that there was a solid audit trail in place.

- c) **Contingency.** In response to a question from a member of the Committee, the Senior Surveyor informed the Committee that the additional funding requested by the report included an amount for a contingency, legal fees and management of the contract.
- d) **Amendment to recommendation - Audit review.** The Vice Chair proposed and Councillor Alison Kelly seconded an amendment to the recommendations of the report to add an additional recommendation as follows:

“Request that internal audit look at this particular procurement to allay any Members’ concerns around it.”

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve additional funding of £105,000 from the Capital Receipts Reserve, to enable the Poole Road Pavilion Re-Roofing project to proceed at an estimated cost of £255,000.**
- (2) **Request that internal audit look at this particular procurement to allay any Members’ concerns around it.**

Following the Committee’s decision, it noted the following information from officers:

The Interim Director of Corporate Services informed the Committee that the Internal Auditor’s work programme was set a year in advance and that this matter would be included in the programme for 2024-25.

The Senior Surveyor informed the Committee that the procurement had been undertaken through the Council’s procurement portal and in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders.

16 EWELL COURT HOUSE FLAT 1 REFURBISHMENT AND USE FOR TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Committee received a report proposing that Flat 1 Ewell Court House be refurbished to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Restricted appendix to the report.** A Member of the Committee commented that they did not feel that the business case attached as Appendix 2 to the report included any information which required it to be restricted from publication. The Chair noted the councillor’s comments and informed the Committee that all items marked as restricted were considered carefully.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Agree to use Flat 1 Ewell Court House for temporary homeless accommodation.**
- (2) Agree to fund the refurbishment budget of up to £125,000 from S106 developer funds.**
- (3) Note that the Head of Property & Regeneration, Head of Housing & Community in consultation with the Head of Finance will progress the refurbishment to completion.**

17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee unanimously resolved to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended) and that pursuant to paragraph 10 of Part 2 of the said Schedule 12A the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

18 COMMERCIAL TENANT UPDATE

The decision on this item is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted Minute.

19 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Agree the draft lease terms set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report for a new commercial lease of Plot 8 Kiln Lane, Epsom.**
- (2) Note that the Head of Property & Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Finance, will instruct external solicitors to prepare the draft lease documentation (based on the draft lease terms in 1) above) and progress the new lease to completion as outlined in this report.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 7.58 pm

COUNCILLOR NEIL DALLEN (CHAIR)

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

CONFERRING THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN

Head of Service:	Piero Ionta, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

The report invites the Committee to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on

1. former Councillor Eber Kington
2. former Councillor Chris Frost, and
3. the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram (awarded posthumously)

in recognition of their eminent services to the Borough.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Recommend that the Council places on record its deep appreciation of the eminent services to the Council rendered by**
 - a. former Councillor Eber Kington**
 - b. former Councillor Chris Frost, and**
 - c. the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram (awarded posthumously)**
- (2) That a Special Meeting of the Council be convened immediately following Full Council on 12 December 2023, at which members will be recommended to confer the title of Honorary Alderman.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 This report invites the Committee to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on
 - a. former Councillor Eber Kington
 - b. former Councillor Chris Frost, and
 - c. the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram (awarded posthumously)
- 1.2 It is customary for the Council in the first year of a new municipal term to consider the possibility of the award of honours to Councillors who have given long and distinguished service and who have usually held the office of Mayor of the Borough.
- 1.3 A nomination for the aforementioned former Councillors has been received by the Council's Chief Executive.
- 1.4 Former Councillor Eber Kington served as an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor for 36 years, from May 1987 to May 2023 and was Mayor of the Borough 1999-2000, and Deputy Mayor 2000-2001.
- 1.5 Former Councillor Chris Frost served as an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor for 24 years, from May 1999 to May 2023 and was Mayor of the Borough 2015-2016, and Deputy Mayor 2014-2015.
- 1.6 The late Former Councillor Clive Smitheram served as an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor for 23 years, from May 1999 to April 2022 and was Mayor of the Borough 2010-2011, and Deputy Mayor 2011-2012.

2 Background

- 2.1 Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Local Authorities to appoint both Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen. The criterion for appointment as Freemen is that an individual should be a "person of distinction" and have "rendered eminent service to the place or area". The criterion for appointment as an Alderman is that an individual "should have rendered eminent service to the Council as [a] past Member of that Council". There is no bar on an individual being both an Honorary Freeman and an Honorary Alderman.
- 2.2 The Local Government Act specifies that both Honorary Freemen and Honorary Aldermen must be appointed at a Special Meeting of Council specifically convened for that purpose (so no other business can be transacted at such a meeting, with the appointment being endorsed by a two thirds majority of those Members in attendance at the meeting).

- 2.3 Honorary Aldermen have no 'legal or social precedence' but it is custom and practice that they are invited to all Civic ceremonial events. The Aldermen have no right to attend meetings of the Council or its committees beyond those of the public, but the Council has recognised their attendance and allowing them to sit within the Chamber. The Aldermen status does not carry with it any allowances or payments to which serving councillors are entitled.
- 2.4 Until consideration of this matter, no prior considerations of the title of Honorary Alderman have been awarded posthumously. It is recommended in light of his exceptional service to the council, that it is appropriate to confer the status of Honorary Alderman posthumously as a mark of the Council's respect for the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

3.1.1 Not applicable

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 Not applicable

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 Not applicable

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 Not applicable

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Section 249(4A) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that principal councils:

' . . . may spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address, or a casket containing an address, to a person upon whom it has conferred the title of honorary alderman or honorary alderwoman.'

- 4.2 There are costs of preparing the traditional scrolls and a photographer for the ceremony. It is also customary for the Council to cover the cost of any hospitality provided for the newly elected Alderman and a select number of guests. Hospitality will be held on a date to be confirmed in March 2024 at a Civic event held at Bourne Hall.

4.3 It is estimated that these costs will amount to £4,250 in total and will be met from existing budgets.

4.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The formal decision to confer the status of Honorary Alderman must be ratified by a Special Meeting of the Council.

5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arise from the content of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** This proposal does not engage any of the Council's Key Priorities.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not applicable.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Not applicable

6.5 **Partnerships:** Not applicable

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- None

STAFF PAY AWARD

Head of Service: Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Urgent Decision?(yes/no)

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Appendices (attached):

Summary

This report provides information and options for the committee to make a recommendation to Council for a staff pay award for 2024/25

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Recommend to full council a pay award for staff for 2024/25 based on one of the options as set out in point 3 below.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The reason is as set out below in the report.

2 Background

- 2.1 The council's annual pay award was previously agreed for a period of four years from 2020 – 2024. The year 2023/24 was the last year of that pay award so a new deal needs to be agreed for 2024/25.
- 2.2 Within the four-year period the cost of living pay award was aligned with Consumer Price Index inflation (CPI) in the month of September prior to the April when the pay award was implemented.
- 2.3 Where CPI exceeded 3%, a cap of 3% was applied to the pay award to ensure affordability.

- 2.4 As stated in the council's Employee Pay & Reward Procedure, we have endeavoured to maintain the partnership approach and have worked closely with the Staff Consultative Group (SCG) to actively consult on pay.
- 2.5 The cost of living pay award for 2022/23 was 3%, as CPI for September 2021 was 3.1%. The pay award for 2023/24 is 3% as the September CPI was 10.1% - in both years, the agreed 3% cap was triggered. For the past two years staff have received pay awards beneath the prevailing inflation rates.
- 2.6 At the time of writing, CPI inflation for September was 6.7%, down from 8.7% in April. According to the [Bank of England's latest Monetary Policy Committee Summary for September 2023](#), inflation is expected to keep falling:
- 2.6.1 "CPI inflation is expected to fall significantly further in the near term, reflecting lower annual energy inflation, despite the renewed upward pressure from oil prices, and further declines in food and core goods price inflation. Services price inflation, however, is projected to remain elevated in the near term, with some potential month-to-month volatility".
- 2.7 Despite inflation moderating to some extent through 2023, there have been widespread strikes and industrial action across the public sector in response to pay deals. For 2024/25, the government has accepted the recommendations from a number of independent pay review bodies to award millions of public sector workers including police officers and teachers, pay awards in the range of 5-7%.
- 2.8 A survey was produced by SCG which sought to gauge staff opinion on a pay deal to which 140 responses were received. This equates to approx. 40% of all staff.
- 2.9 The survey responses have been discussed/analysed and the recommendations are as follows:
- 2.9.1 Given the current uncertainty with inflation rates there was an overwhelming preference for a single year deal (82% of respondents in favour).
- 2.9.2 Annual pay progression applies to all employees who have not reached the maximum spinal column point of their grade. It is awarded to employees who are in post at the end of the financial year, i.e. 31 March and on or before 1st October of the previous year, based on a recommendation by their manager in line with the council's Performance Management Procedure.

- 2.9.3 Pay progression is budgeted for in the medium term financial strategy (MTFS). It equates to c.2% of salary and is only applicable to those staff who are not at the top of their pay grade. For some staff, pay progression is considered as separate to the pay award.
- 2.9.4 Approximately a fifth of staff are currently at the top of their pay grade and this will rise to approximately a third by next year. 58% of respondents to the survey were in favour of including provision for recognising those at the top of their pay grade within the pay deal.
- 2.9.5 Of the total percentage of respondents who expressed a specific view, 80% of staff indicated that an increase in the 5-7% range was appropriate, with the majority of staff expressing a view closer to 7%.
- 2.9.6 A further sentiment emerging from the survey was that the council should fund the highest percentage pay award possible rather than supporting one off, non-consolidated payments or payments in kind such as an increase to holiday entitlement, etc.
- 2.10 The cost of any deal is crucial, with the council already facing a budget deficit of £1.1m in 2024/25. In budget planning for the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) pay has been assumed to be 3% for the next 4 years, therefore any award above 3% will increase the council's projected deficit and result in additional, compensating service income or savings having to be identified.
- 2.11 But based on the feedback above, wider-public sector settlements and the current level of inflation which remain high, 3% is not considered to be a suitable offer by staff.
- 2.12 The council also needs to consider its position as an employer (and its ability to recruit and retain staff) compared to other neighbouring authorities whose starting salaries are often higher than Epsom and Ewell.
- 2.13 In addition to the above, the UK National Living Wage (NLW) is expected to rise to at least £11.00 per hour (an increase of at least 5.7%) with effect from 1 April 2024. In line with the council's Pay Policy Statement, no employee will be paid below the NLW rate.
- 2.14 NLW has repeatedly risen by a higher percentage than our pay awards in recent years, which has eroded any headroom we previously had within our pay scales and this will need to be monitored and addressed as appropriate.

3 Options

- 3.1 Each 1% pay award costs the council circa £130k per annum. With a 3% pay award already factored into the council's most recent projections, this means a 4% pay award would increase the council's existing projected budget deficit (currently c.£1.1m) by £130k. A 5% pay award would increase the projected deficit by c.£260k, and so on.
- 3.2 In light of the above information on historic pay, current levels of inflation, staff expectations on pay, and the council's financial position, councillors are asked to consider a range of pay options.
- 3.3 Option 1 would be a 3% pay award, in line with existing financial projections, with no increase to the council's existing projected deficit.
- 3.4 Option 2 would be a 4% pay award, increasing the council's projected budget deficit by c.£130k.
- 3.5 Option 3 would be a 5% pay award, increasing the council's projected budget deficit by c.£260k.
- 3.6 Option 4 would be a 6% pay award, increasing the council's projected budget deficit by c.£390k.
- 3.7 In all of the above options:
 - 3.7.1 staff will also remain eligible for pay progression (if not already at the top of their pay grade). Pay progression can typically be worth up to an additional 2% increase in salary, which has already been factored into the council's financial projections.
 - 3.7.2 no employee will be paid below the National Living Wage rate uplift.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 4.1 Equality Impact Assessment
 - 4.1.1 The pay award applies equally to all staff.
- 4.2 Crime & Disorder
 - 4.2.1 There are no issues that arise as a result of this report.
- 4.3 Safeguarding
 - 4.3.1 There are no issues that arise as a result of this report.
- 4.4 Dependencies
 - 4.4.1 None

4.5 Other

4.5.1 None

5 Financial Implications

5.1 Apart from a 3% pay award, the three other options – increases of 4%, 5% or 6% – would result in a requirement to identify additional savings or income of c.£130k, £260k or £390k respectively.

5.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The council already faces a significant challenge to address its existing projected budget gap of £1.1m for 2024/25. The size of any pay award will have a direct impact the council's financial sustainability, particularly because additional savings/income typically become increasingly more difficult to identify.

5.3 If either of options 2-4 is chosen, the Council will need to be tasked with identifying additional savings or income, as set-out in paragraph 5.1.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** The committee is asked to make a recommendation to Full Council on a staff pay award, and it is within the remit of the committee to do so.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

- The paper has implications on recruiting and retaining staff as well as providing a responsible budget to manage the council's finances.

7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

7.5 **Partnerships:** None

This page is intentionally left blank

URGENT DECISIONS

Head of Service: Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Appendices (attached):

Summary

To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.1 since the last meeting.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) To note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the Committee.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.1.

2 Background

- 2.1 Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The scheme of delegation sets out at Paragraph 3.1 that the Chief Executive and Directors are authorised to take decisions on grounds of urgency regarding matters which would otherwise be reserved for determination by a Committee or Council. A matter can be deemed urgent if, in the reasonable opinion of the officer concerned, a delay would seriously prejudice the interest of the Council or of the public and it is not practicable to convene a quorate meeting of the relevant decision-making body in sufficient time to take the decision.

- 2.2 Since the last meeting of the strategy and Resources Committee, two urgent decisions have been taken. Both were agreed with the Chair of this committee. They are as follows:

Urgent decision 1

- 2.3 Surrey County Council has invited EEBC to join the Surrey/Sutton business rates pool for 2024/25 and requested that the Council urgently agree a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU allows Surrey CC to submit an application to form the pool to DLUHC by the 10 October deadline.
- 2.4 The key benefits to EEBC from being in the pool are expected to be:
- Projected additional retained business rates income of £150k for EEBC in 2024/25, although the actual benefit will depend on the actual rate of business rates growth in the year;
 - The MoU confirms that each individual authority will receive at least the same level of funding they would have received without the pool (i.e. no District will be worse off from being in the pool)
 - The gains from being in the pool would be split 50:50 between County and the Districts

Urgent decision 2

- 2.5 The council wrote to public 6th form schools in the borough to make them aware of the Chuter Ede fund and to invite applications. In total 7 applications were received which would allow a payment of £250 to each applicant. This is for support for living expenses or course materials to help Epsom and Ewell residents when starting at university. At this level of payment, there are sufficient funds in the trust to make payments from the interest accrued.
- 2.6 This is the first time in many years that we have made this payment, so it has been discussed with the Chair of the committee. The reason for marking it as an urgent item is the fact that S&R committee acts as the Trustee, rather than the value of the payments involved.
- 2.7 As a result of the timings it was expected that the payments should be made as soon after term commences, which is prior to the date of this committee.

Urgent decision 3

- 2.8 The gas supply contract for the Council's metered buildings was close to expiry and via an energy consultant, quotations were received from multiple suppliers.

- 2.9 The Council took advantage of relatively low July gas pricing by signing a 3-year fixed unit cost gas contract. The new contract was 2.25 x the cost of the Council's previous 3-year fixed contract agreed in 2020 i.e. prior to the Ukraine War which prompted a 6-fold increase in gas prices and government intervention. By taking fixed rate contracts at favourable rates, the Council has avoided the high gas prices incurred by some organisations.
- 2.10 By signing a 3-year contract, the risk of future price increases is mitigated and it provides the Council with reasonable certainty for medium term financial planning.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment
- 3.1.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.2 Crime & Disorder
- 3.2.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.3 Safeguarding
- 3.3.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.4 Dependencies
- 3.4.1 none
- 3.5 Other
- 3.5.1 none

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** These are set out as above.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** There are no legal issues that arise from this report.

6 Background papers

- 6.1 The Urgent decisions have already been published on members news.

This page is intentionally left blank