

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**15 November 2023**

### **COUNCILLOR GARETH DADD**

#### **Workforce**

##### **NJC Pay Award 2023-24**

Agreement has now been reached nationally on the pay rates for the majority of colleagues covered by national NJC terms and conditions (this doesn't include teachers, those covered by Soulbury or chief officers) from 1 April 2023. There was no change to the final employers' offer. At NYC we agreed to pay the employers offer in July so staff could realise the pay award earlier. This was done working closely with Unison and was paid in July under a local agreement. We will now feed into the national consultation for 2024/2025.

#### **Restructures**

We are progressing with restructures following the movement to North Yorkshire Council. These are progressing with pace but after feedback from staff they are wanting to progress to have certainty in their role and being able to move forward. Everyone approaches change differently and no one size fits all, there is support available for all staff through the Employee Assistance Programme and online modules available to support resilience. The web site also provides information on 'Looking After You'. [Looking after you \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

#### **Support for Managers**

Managers are key in driving the restructures and delivering the services required to the council. A lot of support is being made available to managers through face-to-face training, tool kits, Chief Executive managers sessions to name a few. These are being well received and we will continue with this programme of development and engagement throughout the next 12 months.

#### **Finance**

We're now very much in the build up to the budget. It is worth reminding members that the current year's budget is predicated on a £30 million deficit which is funded by reserves. We are awaiting the position for quarter 2 which will build upon the good news that we were £5 million ahead of where we had budgeted but this is still a deficit of £25m and this is clearly not a sustainable position. It will also build upon the savings of £3.8 million that have been delivered as a new unitary on senior management as I have reported previously.

Plans are therefore afoot for savings proposals and let's be clear that we will have to make some difficult decisions as do councils across the country. Of course, we have the benefit of cashing in the unitary dividend and so I expect to see the majority of savings building upon the opportunities of being a new unitary council. It will also build upon the savings of £3.8 million that have been delivered as a new unitary on senior management as I have reported previously.

Officers have been working up proposals that will be put to members in the very near future and I have been working with Executive Member colleagues to explore the art of the possible. I would urge members to attend the member seminars in December and January in order to help familiarise with the key financial challenges and proposals. These will also present an opportunity to understand the proposals in greater depth and to explore service operational challenges.

It is possible that this year's budget will be somewhat more challenging to pull together, not only because it is the first full year of the merging of eight councils, but the Chancellor's autumn statement is due on 22nd of November. This is later than usual and we are led to believe that the full finance settlement for local government is not likely to be delivered until a few days before Christmas. Whilst the government provided some indicative information last year, the devil is always in the detail on such matters. At this stage, however, I expect the council to still be seeking to plug a recurring gap of circa £45 million as was set out earlier this year in the MTFS.

### **Property**

A second meeting has taken place of the members group looking at asset rationalisation. Work is progressing in a number of areas of quick wins but as we are discovering, there are some finer details that pose challenges to the pace of delivery. Nevertheless, we are seeking to work our way through that and I can assure Members that I am pushing for the maximum pace possible.

It is also worth bringing to members attention that we are discovering significant maintenance challenges for a range of our new assets. This will present a challenge to the budget and we will need to provide for future investment in our properties, even though we anticipate our property footprint to decrease.

### **Procurement**

The new Public Contract Regulations are due late 2024. The new regime will deliver simpler, more effective public sector procurement, and help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) secure a greater share of approximately £300bn of expenditure per year which public sector bodies spend each year.

To drive further increases in spend with SMEs and within the local economy changes have been made at a local level to the councils Procurement and Contracts Procedure Rules which means where Officers are seeking three quotes, quotes should be sought from at least one local supplier based within North Yorkshire and at least one SME. We hope the money will help consolidate our position as a council that does higher levels of business with local suppliers and SMEs.