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AGENDA

Meeting: **Staffing Committee**

Date: **9th November 2026** Time: **7.30 p.m.**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, Essex**

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above Meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

To be present: Councillors -

P.	Barlow	(Chair)	B.	Fleet
J.	Martin	(Vice Chair)	P.	Heath
L.	Barlow		R.	Playle

Nikki Smith
Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda. Members are reminded to declare interests as soon as they become aware of them, should the need arise throughout the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 22nd JULY 2026

To receive the minutes of the meeting held 22nd July 2026 (previously circulated).

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY AGREEMENT

To receive an update on the Local Government Services Pay Award, attached at page 3 .

5. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

To review, amend and adopt the Pay Policy statement, attached at page 4.

6. CARETAKER'S HANDBOOK

To review and adopt a Caretaker's Handbook, previously circulated .

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

TO RESOLVE At this point, the Chair will move the following resolution: Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2) and in accordance with Standing Order 3(d), the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

8. STAFFING UPDATE

To receive an update on Staffing Matters.

9. STAFFING PROPOSAL

To receive an update on Staffing Proposals. .

10. STAFF REMUNERATION

To receive an update on Staff Remuneration. .

11. TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL

To receive a verbal update.

NS/02.11.2026

ITEM NO: 4

Officer Report: Local Government Pay Agreement

At its meeting on 22 July 2026, the Committee received a report on the NJC pay claim for 2026/27 and the National Employers' offer of a 3.3% increase. Members were advised that the trade unions had rejected the offer and that consultation and preparations for industrial action ballots were underway. The report also confirmed that the Council had budgeted for a 4% pay increase for 2026/27.

National agreement reached

The 2026/27 NJC pay award was agreed nationally on 24 August 2026. The settlement confirms the previously reported 3.3% offer, with effect from 1 April 2026. It provides for:

- A consolidated, permanent increase of 3.3% on all NJC spinal column points 3 to 43 inclusive.
- A 3.3% increase on locally determined pay points above the national pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer, in accordance with the Green Book provisions.
- A 3.3% increase on the NJC allowances covered by the national agreement.

The settlement covers the one-year period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. It does not introduce the additional changes to working hours, annual leave or the minimum hourly rate sought in the unions' original claim.

Trade-union position

Following the initial rejection and subsequent ballot activity, GMB and UNISON reluctantly accepted the offer. Their acceptance provided the majority required for the joint trade-union side to settle the national pay negotiations, notwithstanding Unite's non-acceptance. The position has therefore moved from an outstanding pay offer to an agreed national award.

Implementation

Witham Town Council paid this to staff with their September 2026 salary.

Budget implications

As previously reported, the Council's 2026/27 budget includes provision for a 4% pay increase. The agreed 3.3% award is therefore within the existing pay-award provision and is 0.7 percentage points below the budgeted assumption.

Advice: To receive and note.

Witham town council

Pay Policy Statement 2026/2027

1) Scope
2) Pay Determination
3) Remuneration for Town Clerk
4) Remuneration for all other employees
5) Termination of employment (severance)
6) Fairness in Pay
7) Social Value
8) Mental Health and Wellbeing
9) Publication of Pay
10) Legislative Changes
11) Review

For consideration at a meeting of the Staffing Committee: 9th November 2026

1) Scope of this Pay Policy Statement 2026/2027

1.1) This Pay Policy statement is produced in accordance with Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011. It was approved by Witham Town Council ("the council") on 14th May 2020 through the Staffing Committee. It is made available on the council's website.

~~Although the council is not deemed a 'relevant authority' according to the Localism Act 2011, our commitment to the highest level of transparency and robust governance is reflected in publishing this Pay Policy Statement by going above and beyond the statutory expectations as set out in legislation.~~

Witham Town Council is not required to publish a Pay Policy Statement under Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011. The Council nevertheless publishes this statement voluntarily to promote transparency and explain its approach to employee pay and reward.

Included in this Pay Policy Statement ("this statement") are the council's pay and reward policies that are designed: - to enable the council, as an employer, to retain competitiveness in the market place, and to maintain affordability of employment costs.

The council's Staffing Committee determines the terms and conditions of employment for all staff within the scope of this statement, including the application of any discretion available under the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). It will act as the "remuneration committee" for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011. The Town Clerk has delegated powers to implement actions that affect terms and conditions of employment that have first been agreed through the council's Staffing Committee.

2) Pay Determination

2.1) ~~Apart from the Town Clerk, the determination of pay is conducted through a series of conversations and meetings and not through an official annual appraisal, as recommended by Investors In People. The Town Clerk is responsible for submitting remuneration recommendations to the Staffing Committee. Proposals should be assessed against the Council's Remuneration Award Matrix encompassing the following six key points:~~

2.1 Pay Review and Determination

The Council will take a clear, consistent and fair approach to determining and reviewing employee pay. Individual salaries will be considered with reference to the duties and responsibilities of the post, the employee's relevant skills and experience, internal pay relationships, recruitment and retention needs, and the Council's approved budget.

The Council does not allocate posts to fixed salary grades or pay bands. Any contractual entitlement to a pay increase will be honoured. Other individual salary increases will be subject to consideration and approval through the arrangements set out below.

National Pay Awards

National pay awards will be applied in accordance with Section 2.2 of this statement and the employee's contractual terms. These will be considered separately from any discretionary individual salary increase.

Individual Salary Reviews

Employee salaries will normally be reviewed ahead of the annual budgeting process. A review does not automatically result in a salary increase, except where an increase is required by an employee's contractual terms or an applicable national agreement.

The Town Clerk will make recommendations concerning employees other than themselves. Recommendations will take account of:

- The duties, responsibilities and demands of the role.
- Relevant skills, knowledge and experience.
- Performance and contribution, assessed through the Council's Remuneration Award Matrix.
- Pay relationships between comparable roles within the Council.
- Relevant external salary comparisons and recruitment or retention considerations.
- Affordability and the Council's budget.

Regular discussions between employees and their line managers will inform the review. Significant outcomes and the reasons for any proposed salary change will be recorded.

Changes to Duties and Responsibilities

A salary review may also take place where a role changes substantially, including where an employee takes on additional management responsibilities, greater accountability or a wider range of duties.

The review will be supported by an updated job description and an assessment of the additional requirements of the role. Changes in the responsibilities of a post will be considered separately from the employee's performance within that post.

Any proposed salary adjustment must explain the nature of the change, its financial implications and the proposed effective date.

Temporary Additional Duties and Out-of-Hours Work

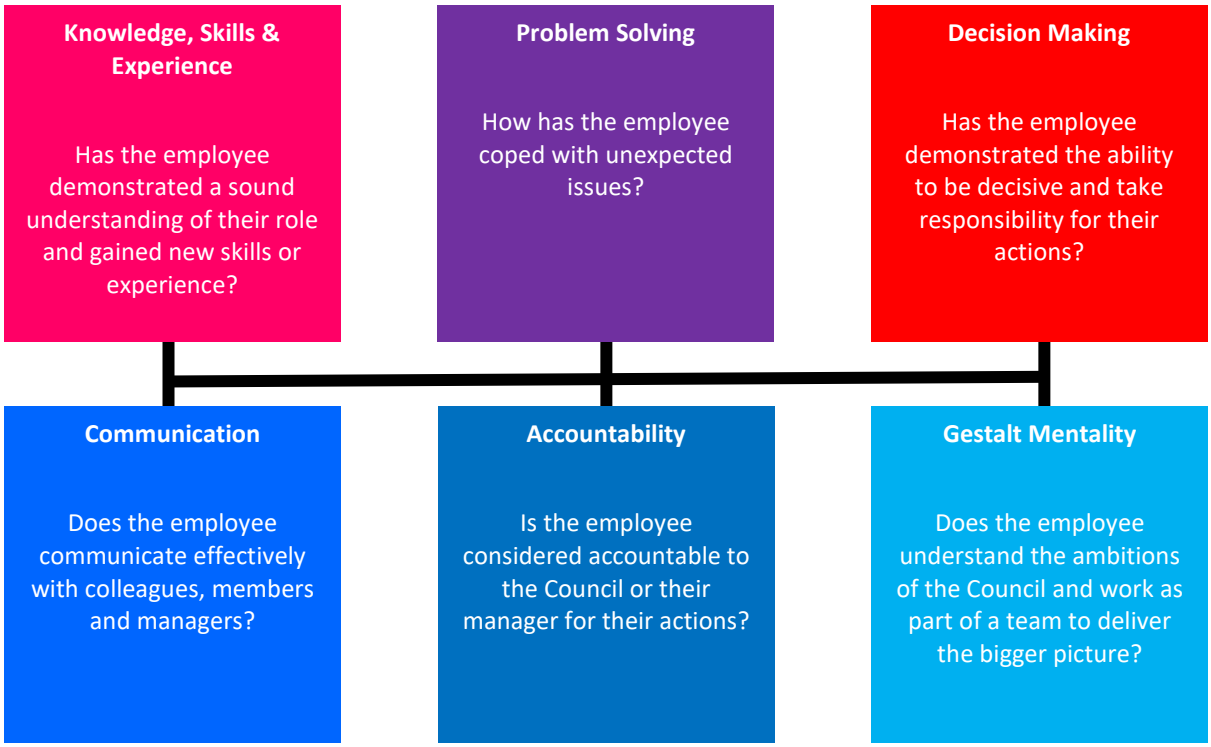
Where an employee is asked to undertake additional duties temporarily or provide regular out-of-hours cover, the Council will consider whether an additional payment, overtime, time off in lieu or another arrangement is appropriate under the employee's contractual terms and relevant Council policies.

Wherever practicable, the duties, duration and any compensation will be agreed and recorded before the arrangement begins.

Approval and Communication

The Staffing Committee will consider individual salary recommendations in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation. Recommendations concerning the Town Clerk will be made by the designated appraisal panel, without the Town Clerk's involvement in the decision.

Decisions will be documented, including the reasons for any change and its effective date. Approved changes will be confirmed to the employee in writing and notified to payroll.



2.2) Pay Bargaining & Negotiation

The Council pays due regard to the 'Green Book' as agreed via the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services and is committed to awarding the agreed pay and conditions as set out in each agreement regardless of trade union membership.

2.3) Allowances

The council does not operate a car allowance scheme. Mileage incurred by employees performing duties on behalf of the Council is reimbursed via the mileage claim system and paid up to the HMRC limit.

~~The council does not operate a performance pay scheme outside the pay grading structure that determines basic pay and therefore there are no performance or bonus payments paid to employees of the council.~~

The Council does not operate a separate performance-related bonus scheme. Performance and contribution may be considered as part of an individual salary review under Section 2.1.

2.4) National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage

The council is committed to complying with the latest National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates, which are updated annually. It is ensured that all our employees are paid at or above these statutory minimums.

2.5) Flexible and Remote Working

The council recognises the importance of work-life balance and the changing nature of work. The council is committed to offering flexible working arrangements where operationally feasible. This may include flexible hours, compressed hours, or remote working options. Any pay considerations

related to these arrangements will be clearly communicated to employees and applied fairly and consistently.

2.6) Equality and Diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of employment, including pay. The council will ensure that their pay policies and practices comply with the Equality Act 2010 and do not discriminate against any employee based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

3) Remuneration for Town Clerk

A panel of members of the Staffing Committee are responsible for conducting the Town Clerk's appraisal and making a recommendation as part of that appraisal to the Staffing Committee. The committee will determine any awards to be made to the Town Clerk taking into account the six key criteria under Section 2 of this document.

4) Remuneration for All Other Employees

The Town Clerk shall be responsible for submitting a summary assessment of all staff remunerations via the Remuneration Award Matrix and submit such recommendations to the Staffing Committee ahead of the annual budgeting process.

5) Termination of Employment (Severance)

5.1) Local Government Pension Scheme

Membership of a pension scheme is determined by the relevant conditions of service and is subject to the rules of the specific scheme. The council operates the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for most employees. For members of the LGPS made redundant on their 55th birthday or later, early access can be gained to their pensionable benefits based on service and salary. Although the LGPS provides for the exercise of discretion that allows for retirement benefits to be enhanced, the council has a policy of not enhancing pension benefits.

The LGPS can also be accessed before normal retirement date for employees who are unable to continue with employment on the grounds of their ill health and who satisfy the conditions for ill-health retirement. An amendment to the LGPS effective from 1st April 2014 allows employees aged between 55 and 75 to choose to access their pension; however, it is at a reduced rate if taken before normal retirement age. The introduction of Auto Enrolment means that new employees to the council, who meet certain criteria, automatically join the LGPS.

5.2) Redundancy Payments

Where an employee is made redundant, severance benefits may be payable subject to the conditions and terms of the redundancy. Where a redundancy payment is made, they are calculated on the basis of 1.5 weeks' gross pay for every complete year of service up to a maximum of 104 weeks. This calculation applies equally across all pay grades.

5.3) Re-engagement of former employees

The council's policy is that there is no general restriction on any future re-employment of an employee who has been made redundant or who is in receipt of a Local Government or other public sector pension. In fact, to adopt policies to the contrary could be subject to challenge under equalities legislation. However, re-employment must be on merit and should be unconnected with the redundancy, except where alternative employment is found and pension and redundancy payments are returned in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The council does not approve of redundancy or early retirement due to redundancy and immediate re-employment of staff either as direct employees, via an agency, or on a consultancy basis. If there are any exceptional circumstances that might appear to justify such arrangements, these must be agreed by the Staffing Committee with sufficient justification from the Town Clerk.

5.4) Exit Payment Cap

While currently revoked, the council is aware of potential future legislation regarding exit payment caps in the public sector. The council will monitor any developments in this area and adjust its policies accordingly to ensure compliance with any new regulations.

6) Fairness in Pay

The council recognises the importance of fairness in pay. Pay and reward policies are applied equally to all employees, except where there are good reasons reflecting genuine factors which apply only to certain employee categories. Any consideration of varying the equal application of any policy in relation to pay and employment must be approved by the Staffing Committee.

7) Social Value

The council recognises the importance of social value in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Our pay policies are designed not only to ensure fair compensation for our employees but also to contribute positively to our local community. This includes providing fair wages, supporting local employment, and promoting skills development.

8) Mental Health and Wellbeing

The council is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our employees. Our pay and benefits policies are designed with this in mind, including provisions for adequate rest periods, support for work-life balance, and access to mental health resources where possible.

9) Publication of Pay

~~The council publishes information about pay in accordance with statutory requirements, and the guidance of the Information Commissioner's Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Information is published on the council's website in the council's annual accounts.~~

The Council will publish remuneration information in accordance with the statutory reporting and transparency requirements applicable to it. Relevant disclosures will be made through its website, annual accounts and other required publications, as appropriate.