

Law & Governance

Direct Line: 01865 529834

E-mail: acourtney@oxford.gov.uk

Town Hall
St Aldate's
Oxford
OX1 1BX

Central Number: 01865 249811



Date: 08 March 2023

Dear Councillor Snowton, Chair of Scrutiny Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Head of Law & Governance to seek your agreement that the deferral of an urgent key decision which has not been notified on the Forward Plan for 28 days, as required by the Council's Constitution (Part 15.17), would not be reasonable.

The urgent decision to be taken on 09 March 2023 concerns an increase in pay of £500 per employee for Oxford City Council staff, to be consolidated with basic salary and backdated to 01 February 2023, to reflect cost of living pressures. The decision to increase pay can be made by the Chief Executive as per the Council's Constitution (Part 5.16(1)).

This will be a key decision due to the value of the decision amounting to expenditure over £500,000 in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (c.£1,000,000 per annum), but there is insufficient time to notify the decision on the Forward Plan for 28 days due to the requirement for backdated payments to be made in the current financial year, which was only established on 06 March 2023. In addition, the payroll deadline for March 2023, the last payment date of the current financial year, is imminent and the Council is required to implement the payment in March 2023 in order to deliver on the agreement which has been reached with the Trade Unions.

Key decisions are normally required to be notified on the Forward Plan for 28 days before being taken but the law and the Council's Constitution (Part 15.17) provide for urgency rules where a key decision can be taken without prior notice if the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee agrees that it would not be reasonable to defer the decision.

Due to the timescales required to notify an urgent key decision on the Forward Plan, at this stage the earliest the Council could implement this decision is 14 March 2023, subject to no call-in being received. This would align with the timescales required for March 2023 payroll.

The Head of Law & Governance is of the view that the Council should aim to allow the usual two day time period for call-in to support transparency so I am not seeking your permission to waive members' rights to call-in the decision under Part 17.9 of the Constitution.

Please note that a copy of this letter will be attached to the public decision notice of this urgent key decision and the urgent key decision will be reported to a meeting of Council in due course.

With best wishes,



Alice Courtney

Alice Courtney
Committee & Member Services Manager (Interim Acting)