

Questions raised over number of six-figure salaries for East Renfrewshire Council chiefs

Posted by RM64 - 15 Apr 2020 16:15

Published Barrhead News On Line -

15/4/2020

News

6 hrs ago

Questions raised over number of six-figure salaries for East Renfrewshire Council chiefs

Campaigners calling for an end to "wasteful spending" have questioned the number of six-figure salaries paid to East Renfrewshire Council bosses.

A "rich list" of all those earning Â£100,000 or more from the local authority has been published by the TaxPayers' Alliance as residents across the Barrhead area are hit with a council tax rise of almost five per cent.

Six senior staff at East Renfrewshire Council were paid a combined total of Â£863,000 after salaries and pension contributions were added.

But the council has stressed that salaries are based on roles and responsibilities, with pay for chief executive Lorraine McMillan set by a national agreement.

In 2018/19, she received a total of Â£138,673, with Â£116,239 of that paid as her salary and the rest going to her pension pot.

The council's chief officer, Julie Murray, received a total of £128,566.

Director of environment Andrew Cahill, deputy chief executive Caroline Innes and director of education Mhairi Shaw are all on £126,667 each.

Margaret McCrossan, head of accountancy and chief financial officer, got a total of £112,970, while chief social work officer Kate Rocks banked £103,147 after her pension contribution.

John O'Connell, chief executive of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: "The country needs every council to cut out waste and prioritise key services without resorting to punishing tax hikes on their residents."

Council officials agreed the tax rise of nearly 5 per cent just weeks before the coronavirus pandemic forced a national shutdown and upended local services and finances.

East Renfrewshire Council said it has made "significant efficiencies" in recent years.

A spokesperson added: "Salaries are based on the roles and responsibilities attached to each position. The chief executive's salary is set as part of a national agreement.

"During these extremely challenging times, it is more important than ever that we have strong leaders helping us to ensure the council adapts and continues to deliver our vital frontline services as best as we possibly can."

The Scottish local authority with the most employees who were paid in excess of £100,000 in 2018-19 was Glasgow with 31.

The biggest single remuneration package went to North Lanarkshire's chief officer for health and social care at £615,550. They were also the highest paid local council employee in the UK.

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