

Outcome of the Pay Protocol Meeting held at Innovation Centre November 20th 2023.

Attendees: Richard Hicks (Chief Executive), Samantha Beck-Farley (Chief Organisational Culture Officer), Mark Hammond (Unison – Regional Officer), Tania Earnshaw (Unison – Branch Secretary).

1. RH welcomed the attendees noting that the Pay Protocol 2024/25 had been launched at the Autumn meeting of the Corporate Consultative Committee, and that Katey Durkin (Chief Finance Officer) had updated that meeting on the detail within the Medium Term Finance Outlook report and highlighted that a £10million allocation had been earmarked for an increase on the current salary budget and had been set aside for any pay awards for the FY commencing April 2024 and the review and correction of Medpay.
- 1.2 At that meeting SBF invited Unison and GMB to submit their joint pay claim for 2024/2025 by no later than 16th October 2023, and SBF confirmed that the joint claim pay had been received by Unison only.
- 3 RH invited TE to share the pay claim, and rationale for the ask.
- 4 TE confirmed that there were four elements to the pay claim:
 - A return to NJC by the third year of this administration.
 - A 10% flat rate, consolidated increase for all staff
 - The introduction of a 35-hour working week with no loss of pay.
 - An uplift to the sleep-in payments of 3.88%.
- 4.1 TE stated that it was the TU's view that this was an affordable increase and that there was a degree of catch-up within the claim as over the past years pay awards the council has not increased enough. TE also shared that a return to NJC is an important request to safeguard future pay awards.
- 4.2 MH stated that the claim was in line with RPI at the time, inflation higher has been much higher than previous pay awards so this is also based on some elements of catch up.
- 4.3 TE highlighted that Unison had conducted a survey of their members around benefits and, there was a strong indicator that Unison members felt that MedPay was not fit for purpose and that there was an equally strong indicator of a desire to return to National Pay Bargaining. In addition it was acknowledged that members are struggling within the current financial situation. Details shared included, compared to KCC, pay low, wages need to rise with inflation, staff are using food banks, fuel for working role is difficult, staff are struggling to cover all bills and live, being in MedPay is demoralising, staff want meaningful rises not real term cuts year on year, general feeling that staff are struggling, and PDRs not supported.

- 4.4 SBF shared with TE that as part of the MedPay review there is a review of the PDR and said she would share the results for a further discussion.
- 4.5 TE stated that a move to a 35 hour week would be a progressive change, however it was shared that additional time off came from members. This was also reflected in the staff survey.
- 5 RH gave an overview of the current and future budgetary pressures facing the Council.
 - 5.1 RH reiterated the importance to us of addressing the historical pay issue, to help towards us being an employer of choice.
 - 5.2 RH confirmed his commitment to the MedPay review for the whole organisation. Stating it is important that it is clear and consistent and that it continues.
 - 5.3 RH shared his aspiration for Government to have confidence in us. And explained the steps we are taking to address the budget pressure.
- 6 ME reiterated that whilst he acknowledges the financial situation realistically Unison cannot accept anything under inflation.
- 7 MH highlighted that while the Unions welcomed the opportunity to engage with Elected Members, it has been frustrating as there was little real engagement in the past, with a new administration it was hopeful that this time it would be different.
- 8 It was commented that the pay claim was solely based on Unison and little contact had been had with GMB.