

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2012

PROPOSAL TO FREEZE INCREMENTS

2012/13 & 2013/14

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

Author: Paula Charker, Employee Relations Manager

Summary

This report sets out the details of the proposal to freeze increments for the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14 and the results of the consultation process with trade unions and staff.

This report will be considered at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) at 6pm on 18 January 2012. The views of the JCC will be reported to the Employment Matters Committee.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The staffing implications of budget reductions are a matter for this committee, which can decide on the policies and processes supporting any changes in staffing. A decision on whether to freeze increments for the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14 will be made by Council, as part of the budget setting process on 23 February 2012.

2. Background

2.1 The Cabinet meeting on 6 September 2011 considered the medium term financial plan (MTFP). This plan reviewed the major financial issues facing the Council over the next three years and provided a framework for the more detailed preparation of the draft revenue budget 2012/15.

2.2 It is clear that the financial arrangements for the council continue to be extremely difficult and this will continue in the medium term.

2.3 The funding gap for the next financial year is projected at £9.5 million after taking into account some efficiencies and savings and assumes a council tax increase of 2.5%.

2.4 In addition the cost of incremental progression continues to run at around £1.6 million per year.

- 2.5 The MTFP currently includes no increase for pay and therefore relies on no overall increase in the pay bill, which for all staff is £215 million, of which £125 million is for services funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with the remaining £90m being borne through council tax and other grant. It is worth noting that every 1% increase in the council tax component is therefore some £900,000 additional pressure against the £9.5 million deficit.
- 2.6 The committee will be aware that incremental progression was frozen last year (2011/12) and linked with a 0% national pay award that meant that individuals did not receive a pay rise at all.
- 2.7 The signs are that nationally there will not be a cost of living award next year, although the trade unions intend to make a claim.
- 2.8 The change of contract that removed the incremental progression for one year was achieved through a collective agreement with the trade unions. In return the council made a one-off payment of £250 to employees earning £19,000 or less a year at a cost of just over £130,000.
- 2.9 An exception to the incremental freeze was made in 2011/12 for those in posts where incremental progression was linked to competency levels/the attainment of qualifications. This included the following groups of staff:
- Social Workers covered by the Children's Care Career Grade Scheme;
 - The progression from B1 grade to B2 grade for Care Managers in Adult Social Care who achieve the Post Qualifying award, and
 - Soulbury staff eligible for SPA increments (Structured Professional Assessment).
- 2.10 Another exception to the incremental freeze in 2011/12 and for any future freeze would be for teachers as there are statutory provisions for teachers' increments and teachers are not included in these proposals. It will be for each Governing Body to decide whether or not to apply the proposal to non-teaching staff in their school. To date, no schools have decided to commence consultation to freeze increments for non-teaching staff.
- 2.10 As part of the decisions made at the 6 September 2011 meeting, the Cabinet authorised the commencement of a consultation aimed at freezing incremental progression for the next two years to meet the financial constraints set out in the MTFP (decision no. 105/2011).
- 2.11 The total number of non-school based staff who would be affected by the proposal is 1924 out of a total staff group of 2819.
- 2.12 The proposal to freeze increments and clarification of the consultation process with staff and the Trade Unions was provided to Members of the Employment Matters Committee on 28 September 2011. The consultation period has now ended and this report details the outcome of the consultation.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The arrangements including a timetable for consultation are detailed in the consultation document distributed to the Trade Unions and is attached as appendix one.
- 3.2 There was early consultation with the Trade Unions on 31 August and early notification to all staff via an e-mail from the Chief Executive regarding the proposal on 1 September 2011.
- 3.3 A formal 90 day consultation period with staff and the Trade Unions commenced on 19 September 2011 and ended on 21 December. During this time employees were given the opportunity to make responses and ask questions via a dedicated email box.
- 3.4 As part of the consultation process, the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director, Organisational Services undertook three presentations for staff on the budget position and the rationale for the proposal to freeze increments. Staff were given the opportunity to air their views and ask questions. These sessions took place on Friday, 9 December at Gun Wharf and Tuesday, 6 December at the St George's Centre, Chatham Maritime.
- 3.5 Consultation also included discussions with the Trade Unions at the Joint Consultative Committee on 13 October 2011, a dedicated meeting regarding the proposal on 5 December 2011 and the Corporate Consultative Committee on 6 December 2011. A further meeting with the Trade Unions has been arranged for Wednesday 11 January 2012 and a verbal update will be given at this meeting.
- 3.6 There were 37 responses from staff to the dedicated email box, including joint responses from UNISON and ASPECT on behalf of their members and also a joint response from a team containing 30 signatures. There were no other responses from other trade unions. All comments received have been made anonymous and are attached as Appendix two for Members to consider.
- 3.7 To summarise, comments fell into a number of themes, mostly opposing the proposals. These included the following:
 - concerns relating to how the proposal will affect pension;
 - the proposals are unfair to the lower paid;
 - detailing personal circumstances and financial hardship;
 - unfairness and inequality of proposal;
 - proposals leading to a dissatisfied, demoralised, and de-motivated workforce;
 - a belief that the consultation process is worthless as considered already a "done deal"
 - suggestions for alternative ways of saving the money;
 - agree to proposal providing consideration is given to the lower paid.

4. Advice and Analysis

- 4.1 It should be noted that the number of responses received for the consultation that ended on 21 December is considerably lower in number than those received during the consultation that took place in 2010 where 114 responses were received.
- 4.2 It could be determined from this that there is little opposition to the proposals to freeze increments. However, it could also be a reflection of the current mood of the workforce where influences such as the organisation change process, the external economic climate and the lack of any pay rise have a negative impact on the morale and motivation of staff. This can be inferred from the responses that were received.
- 4.3 At the Corporate Consultative Committee on 6 December the trade unions said that they would be willing to commence negotiations on a collective agreement providing a payment of £250 were to be paid for those employees earning less than £21,000. Since then, UNISON has undertaken an indicative ballot with their members, the result being that UNISON, subject to the result of a formal ballot with their members, would negotiate a collective agreement for a 12 month increment freeze on the basis that all staff on £21,500 or under receive a payment of £250.
- 4.4 The present position is that the Council is meeting with the Trade Unions on 11 January 2012 to confirm that it will continue to negotiate a £250 payment for staff on £21,500 or less but only on the basis of it being a 2 year collective agreement, with £250 being paid both years. This is because it is highly unlikely that a full pay review will be completed within one year. A verbal update on progress will be given to Members at the Committee.
- 4.5 If agreed, the cost of this would be £316,740 for each year, which would have to be found from elsewhere in the Council's budget.
- 4.6 It is clear from considering the pay scales as part of freezing of increments that they are no longer fit for purpose and require an overall review. When the pay and grade scheme was introduced in 2002 as a result of an equal pay review long over-lapping grades were introduced. The reason for this was to both minimize the cost of the changes to grades and protect staff pay as much as possible. However these long grades mean that the pay bill is continuing to rise, particularly as the increments are currently time-served, i.e. automatic. It is therefore imperative that the current pay scheme is reviewed to ensure that it continues to be both affordable and fit for purpose.
- 4.7 Any pay and grading scheme has two main elements; the ranking of the jobs according to their relative size and the pay rates applied to the rankings. It is possible to amend the pay rates, say by reducing the length of the grades, but this is quite a blunt tool and would also mean that either a large number of people have their pay reduced or a significant amount of money has to be put into protection arrangements.

- 4.8 It is therefore proposed that a complete review of pay and grade is undertaken, including considering different types of job evaluation schemes as well as a range of remuneration packages. It is suggested that nothing is ruled out at this stage including competency and/or performance related pay. Clearly any proposals would be subject to consultation with staff and trade unions. If it is agreed by this committee that such a review should take place this will commence immediately with a view to returning to the committee in June with an initial proposal. If a major review of pay is undertaken this will take at least 18 months and therefore it is important to have some stability on pay arrangements for the next two years. This is why the proposal to freeze increments is for two years to allow time for a considered approach to be taken.
- 4.9 In addition to the pay review the Localism Act, which was passed earlier this month, requires local authorities to prepare a pay policy statement, which must articulate that authority's own policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, particularly its senior staff (or 'chief officers') and its lowest paid employees. The statement must be prepared for each financial year, beginning with 2012/13. It must be approved by Full Council and then once agreed be published on the councils website. The Employment Matters Committee will be invited to attend a briefing regarding the pay policy statement before it is put before Full Council.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 The risks in relation to these proposed changes relate to the personal financial implications for employees and how this may affect morale, motivation and performance, particularly in the light of other financial pressures such as the proposed increase in pension contributions in April 2012.
- 5.2 The council also faces the risk of losing highly valued skills of employees who decide to find employment elsewhere.

6. Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)

- 6.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3.
- 6.2 Findings from the screening indicate that the area where there is potential for cause for concern would be for those employees in the age range of 16-24 who are on the lower grades D1, E2 and E1. It would appear from the data that those employees in this group will be adversely affected. However, there is potential for this adverse affect to be mitigated by the payment of £250 for lower paid staff. The analysis for the full DIA is attached at Appendix 3a and the full DIA is attached at Appendix 3b.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 The financial implications are outlined above in paragraph 2. If the £1.6 million is not found from freezing increments for the financial years

2012/13 and 2013/14 it will have to be found from elsewhere in the council's budget.

- 7.2 If the above proposal is agreed by Full Council but without a collective agreement with the Trade Unions, this would result in a change to the current contractual terms and conditions of employment for the staff affected. In order to implement these changes it will be necessary for the council to reach agreement with individual employees by agreeing a variation to their current contracts of employment.
- 7.3 In the event that an agreement cannot be reached with the individual employee, the council can then proceed to unilaterally vary the existing contract by issuing the employee with the contractual notice to terminate their current employment contract and then issue the new contract of employment incorporating the new term which would effectively result in the freezing of entitlement to incremental progression. If the variation is not agreed with the individual employee, a right of appeal would be available and details of the appeal process would be provided at that time. A senior manager would consider any appeals.
- 7.4 The council must ensure that the process for any changes to contracts of employment complies with the required statutory obligations to inform and consult employees both collectively and individually under Section 188 of The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 in order to minimise successful employment tribunal claims.

8. Recommendations for Employment Matters Committee

- 8.1 The Employment Matters Committee is asked to recommend to Cabinet and Council that:
 - 8.1.1 Increments are frozen for the financial years 2012/13 and 2013/14 with a review of the pay and grading structure being developed and consulted upon during this time.
 - 8.1.2 The Assistant Director, Organisational Services is given delegated authority to continue negotiations with the Trade Unions with a view to reaching a collective agreement on this proposal, which achieves, within the present financial constraints, some protection for lower paid staff.
 - 8.1.3 If this collective agreement is not reached, that individual employees are asked whether they will agree to a variation of their contracts of employment for a freeze of their increments for two years.
 - 8.1.4 For individuals who do not agree to this variation, that notice be given that their present contracts of employment are terminated and new contracts are offered stating their increments for 2012 and 2013 will be frozen.
 - 8.1.5 Incremental progression linked to competency levels/qualifications achieved should be retained for the following:

- Social Workers covered by the Children's Care Career Grade Scheme,
- The progression from B1 grade to B2 grade for Care Managers in Adult Social Care who achieve the Post Qualifying 1 award and
- Soulbury staff eligible for SPA increments (Structured Professional Assessment).

8.2 The Employment Matters Committee is also asked to agree that the Assistant Director, Organisational Services commences a complete review of pay and grade with initial findings being reported to this Committee in June.

Lead officer contact

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Background Papers:

Cabinet Report - Medium Term Financial Plan, 6 September 2011

Employment Matters Committee Report, 28 September 2011.

Consultation Document for Trade Unions – Proposal to freeze increments for a further two years from April 2012

1. Background

Every September the Council produces its Medium Term Financial Plan which sets out the Council's expected funding and spending over a three year period. This year's plan was considered by Cabinet on 6 September.

The publication of the plan marks the start of the council's annual budget setting work for the next financial year. The budget setting process concludes early next year with consideration of budget proposals by Cabinet on 14 February and by full council on 23 February.

Last year's plan was set in unprecedented turbulent times for the public sector. Reductions in funding received from central government and the demographic pressures on many council services remain a challenge.

The government's spending review late last year provided some clarity about how much council funding would be cut. However there are still some areas of government funding where we are not clear about the impact of cuts on council budgets.

Our transformation programme, Better for Less, was set up last year to help the council radically change working practices and to respond to the twin challenges of improving the quality of services and reducing costs. This is well on track to deliver savings in the current and subsequent financial years.

However the improvements to services and savings that will be delivered are only part of the picture. It has always been understood that hard decisions will need to be made in the budget setting process for 2012/13 to ensure the council can achieve a balanced budget.

Work has already begun on the category management project which is expected to deliver substantial savings through more effective commissioning and procurement as well as through renewing many of the council's existing external contracts. Work is already underway to achieve improvements in services and reductions in costs through changes in adult social care, SEN provision and property rationalisation.

Last year you will be aware that we reached a collective agreement with trades unions to freeze incremental progression for one year to help achieve a balanced budget. However we cannot ignore the impact on our finances of the growth of the council's staff pay bill over the next three years. For example next year the additional cost of incremental progression is forecast to be around £1.6 million.

In light of this a meeting took place with trades unions on 31 August to start consultation with staff and unions on a further two year freeze to incremental

pay progression from April 2012 as part of a range of options to help the council address the challenges facing it.

The council is part of the national pay negotiations and will honour any nationally negotiated changes to pay that staff are entitled to.

The management team has been working closely with members on these measures and recognises that some of them will be difficult for staff and their families.

2. Proposal

The proposal is to freeze increments for a further two years from April 2012.

Of the staff group involved, there are approximately 1944 staff not on the top of the grade and 851 staff on the top of the grade. Therefore if the proposal is agreed, 69.55% of staff would be affected and 30.45% would not be. We are consulting both groups of staff on this proposal.

There are statutory provisions for teachers' increments and teachers are not included in these proposals. It will be for each school governing body to decide whether or not to consult on the proposal with support staff in their school.

There was early consultation with you on 31 August 2011 and early notification to staff on 1 September 2011.

It is recognised that, if the above proposal is agreed, this would result in a change to the current contractual terms and conditions of employment for the staff affected.

In order to implement these changes in the absence of trade union agreement, it will be necessary for the council to reach agreement with individual employees by agreeing a variation to their current contracts of employment. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached with the individual employee, the council can then proceed to unilaterally vary the existing contract by issuing the employee with the contractual notice to terminate their current employment contract and then issue the new contract of employment incorporating the new term which would effectively result in the freezing of entitlement to incremental progression for a further two years. If the latter is the case, a right of appeal would be available and details of the appeal process would be provided at that time. A senior manager would consider any appeals.

You will note from the timetable below that the Employment Matters Committee on 18 January 2012 will consider all responses and make recommendations to Cabinet on 14 February 2012 who will make recommendations to Council on 23 February 2012, where the final decision will be made.

If the proposal is agreed by full Council on 23 February 2012, and if we have not reached agreement with you, contractual notice will be given to the affected employees who have not agreed to the proposed variation to contract. Contractual notice will vary from one month to three months depending upon individual contracts.

For staff whose increment is normally paid on 1 April:

If the notice period is one month, the increment will be frozen from 1 April 2012 for two years.

If the notice period is longer than one month, the increment will be paid and then removed from the start date of the new contract of employment. For example, for staff entitled to a two-month notice period, they would receive the increment on 1 April 2012 but it would be removed two months after they had been given notice and offered the new contract. So, if notice were given on 25 February 2012, the increment would be paid on 1 April 2012 but removed on 25 April 2012.

For staff whose increment is normally paid on 1 September:

Notice would be given during late February/early March 2012 that the increment would be frozen from 1 September 2012 for two years.

For staff who would normally have received an increment on the anniversary of their appointment:

Appropriate notice would be given on a case-by-case basis

For staff commencing employment or promoted on or after 2 October 2011 who would normally have received an increment on the 6-month anniversary date of the start date or promotion:

Appropriate notice would be given on a case-by-case basis.

Staff will be asked towards the end of the consultation period to let us know whether, if the proposal is agreed at the Council meeting on 23 February 2012, they are willing to accept a variation to their individual contract. If that is the case, there will be no need to issue notice to those staff and a variation to contract will be offered. If agreed, the implementation date will be the same as it would have been had they been given notice. This is to ensure that there is no detriment to those staff that may prefer to accept a variation to contract.

3. Timetable

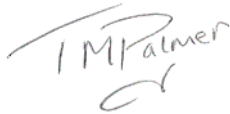
The proposed timetable is set out below.

31 August 2011	Early consultation meetings with Trade Unions (TUs)
01 September 2011	E mail from Neil Davies to all staff regarding the proposal
06 September 2011	Cabinet meeting considered Medium Term Financial Plan and decided to begin consultation on the proposal to freeze increments for a further 2 years
19 September 2011	Commence formal 90-day consultation with TUs and employees
28 September 2011	Employment Matters Committee consider proposals on pay
13 October 2011	Joint Consultative Committee between Members of the Council and Trades Unions to discuss issues
03 November 2011	Report to Employment Matters Committee on present situation
21 December 2011	90 day Consultation Period ends
18 January 2012	Employment Matters Committee considers responses and makes recommendations to Cabinet on 14 February 2012 who will consider the draft budget for 2012/13
14 February 2012	Cabinet considers draft budget and makes recommendations to Council
23 February 2012	Council Meeting to take final decision
From 23 February 2012	If proposal agreed, issue notice of termination of contract to affected employees and offer new contracts to those employees who have not accepted a variation to contract
11 April 2012	Update report to Employment Matters Committee
March-May 2012	Any appeals received will be considered and heard

Next steps

A report is to be presented to Employment Matters Committee on 18 January 2012. The end of the consultation period is 21 December 2011 and any comments that are received by then will be reported to Members.

Employees and Trade Unions are invited to comment on the proposal. Please send any e-mail comments that you may have on the proposals to: employee.consultation@medway.gov.uk. If you do not have access to e-mail, you can write to HR Advice at Gun Wharf. All comments will be included as an appendix to the report presented to Members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Palmer' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Tricia Palmer
Assistant Director, Organisational Services

**Employee and Trade Union
responses to consultation on
proposal to freeze increments
2012/13 & 2013/14**

19 September 2011 – 21 December 2011

UNISON response

On behalf of UNISON members

Unison members are very angry about the proposal to freeze increments for 2 years. For many this is the final straw on the camels back.

Over the last few years our members have suffered ;

freezes on cost of living increases,
removals of essential car user allowances,
additional travel and parking costs,
and a 12 month freeze on increments.

The majority of our members are not highly paid and they are seriously struggling to manage with these cuts and with rising costs they are incurring. Already many of our members are in home situations where the wider cuts have resulted in redundancies with family members or reductions in hours for partners so their income is becoming more and more critical as they carry the impact in society of the wider cuts. We are seeing this in an increased level of referral to Unison Welfare and sadly in people having to step away from the pension scheme as they simply can't afford that cost, while their household incomes are being so dramatically squeezed . We are also seeing people who have been downgraded through the austerity cuts and through Phase 1 of BFL.

At the same time though they continue to see significant use of agency and what looks like an increase in highly paid consultants at Gun wharf, making the decisions that actually senior management should, on their pay grades, be able to make. They are also dismayed that despite playing to the press and public about sharing the pain, elected members have still not had the allowance cut that was part of the 2011 Budget setting.

Unison invited all members to an increment freeze meeting at the start of the consultation. This meeting was very angry and aggrieved to find that yet again they were being expected to carry the bulk of the responsibility for the banker's behaviour. The feeling was that the increment freeze was an 'easy option' being taken by Medway Council when actually a proper top to bottom strategic plan was needed in response to the budget challenges that now face us until at least 2016. The meeting requested that the branch ballot for industrial action short of a strike, i.e. work to rule and removal of goodwill.

Since then we have held off the ballot until after the pension strike. We have now put it to indicative ballot asking members to consider 2 possible courses. Option 2 is a recognition that we understand the council is under severe financial pressure, however we need to attempt to mitigate the disproportionate impact on the low paid. Option 2 came from discussions with the combined union groups.

OPTION 1 - The branch ballots for industrial action short of strike

OPTION 2 - The branch negotiates a collective agreement for a 12 month increment freeze on the basis that all staff on £21,500 or under receive a payment

of £250

The ballot closed yesterday and the responses were approximately 2 to 1 to support the branch pursuing Option 2 with management.

That is Unison's position on the increment freeze proposal. We will be unable to move any lower than the £21,500 protection and ideally that would need to only be for 12 months. Clearly we would still need to back this up by a full formal ballot, but as stated that is the view clearly coming back from members on the indicative ballot.

Members take this position to support the council in these difficult times but they wanted senior management and the elected members to be made fully aware of just how difficult staff are finding the increased erosion of their incomes and their terms and conditions, and just how unhappy they are with the situation.

ASPECT RESPONSE TO THE CABINET PROPOSALS TO FREEZE INCREMENTS FOR 2 YEARS FROM APRIL 2012

Written on behalf of the members of the Association for Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts (Aspect).

While local members of Aspect absolutely accept that savings need to be made, they do not agree with the current proposals to freeze increments for some members of staff. Several points have been raised by members and are summarised below. These are the same points that were raised last year during the consultation to freeze increments for 1 year.

Unequal sharing of the burden of cuts

The fact that the same group of staff has been targeted and that this proposal is for 2 years has struck a cord with people's sense of fair-play in both affected and 'unaffected' groups. The feature of the proposal which has received most comment is that a precedent seems to have been set last year and that the unequal sharing of cuts is becoming a norm.

Another point for consideration is reconciling the anticipated saving with approximately two thirds of the workforce feeling discriminated against and undervalued. Whilst employees will remain professional at all times, can the council realistically expect staff to go above and beyond for an employer who takes repeated action to cut/freeze the salary of all but the longest serving members of staff?

SPA points

The recent restructure of the school improvement team resulted in redundancies and salary reductions for Aspect members (amounting to several thousand pounds in some cases). Staff were assured that they could build their SPA points back up to negate the impact of the salary drop before payment protection ceased. In this respect Aspect members would not agree to any proposal that includes freezing SPA points, but would be prepared to agree to a proposal where SPA points continue to be available in line with current arrangements.

The cumulative effect on spending power

The erosion of salary through a continued freeze is cumulative. Inflation is currently between 4 and 5% and indicators are that it will fluctuate further. Over a three or four year period, salaries that fail to keep pace with inflation can therefore be eroded by as much as 12% to 16%. The figure is even greater if increments are not awarded. Set in the context of rising costs such as increased fares, petrol prices, rises in VAT and so on, the 'buying power' of Medway employees may, over a four year, period be over 25% less than it is now.

HR costs

Several union members have commented on the HR and admin costs (including first class post) associated with undertaking this exercise again. Have the HR costs been quantified and built into the savings total?

Recruiting and retaining high quality staff

This proposal should also be considered in the context of what impact any proposed freeze will have on the recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce. Some parts of the Council work in very challenging circumstances and struggle to recruit and retain staff. Any erosion of terms of service will compound this issue in some areas.

The proposal last year was presented as temporary, even though questions were raised about how further increments would be funded. During recent re-structures within the school improvement team, several staff chose to apply for jobs within the council on different pay grades rather than take the attractive voluntary redundancy packages on offer. The school improvement team have been left with significant, ongoing vacancies for 8 months with the remaining staff working very hard to cover these. However, given that teachers and schools are unaffected by

this proposal, many Aspect members are now seeing colleagues who transferred into school settings receive their increments and are beginning to question the benefit of staying within the school improvement team. In this respect, the position of many Aspect members is different as they have comparable pay to school leaders and can easily transfer between council and school settings. Aspect is concerned that the proposal will have a negative impact on the ability of the council to keep pace with school pay and conditions and therefore retain the highly qualified and experienced team needed to secure the improvements that are necessary in many Medway schools.

Summary

Aspect local members do not feel that they can agree in principle to the current proposal due to the inherent unfairness of asking two thirds of the workforce to shoulder more than their share of the burden of cuts for a second time.

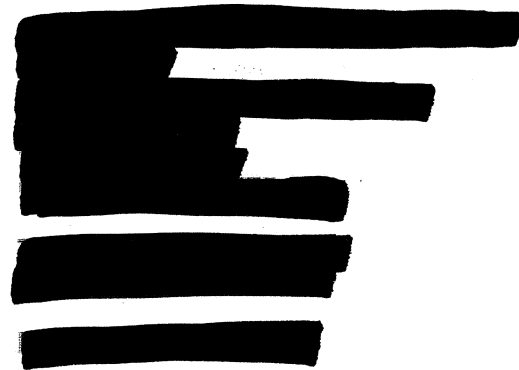
However, Aspect would be prepared to reach a collective agreement with the council to avoid a 'dismiss and re-engage' situation, if the option to be awarded SPA points continued to be made available to those working on Soulbury scales.

Aspect would like the council to consider again the alternatives that have been presented to them, which involve staff sharing the cut more equally but with protection built in for the lowest paid members of staff.

Please
contact:
Your ref:
Our ref:
Date: 19 December 2011
Direct Line:



Employee Consultation
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
ME4 4TR



To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Proposal to incremental freeze.

We are writing in response to the proposed incremental freeze to Council staff, although responding as a collective this response should be considered as **30 individual responses** rather than as a singular response.

Having often being subjected to "consultations" we are of the view that this is once again is a fait accompli, which we are sure, has not encouraged, or promoted, responses. We also note that it nearly exactly a year since we were last presented with a similar scenario although at that time we were led to believe a freeze to increments, and the cost of living increase, was for one year only.

It is also with great interest that we note the content of paragraph 21; page 3: *"If the proposal is agreed by full Council on 23 February 2012, and if we have not reached agreement with you or reached a collective agreement with the trade unions, contractual notice will be given to the affected employees who have not agreed to the proposed variation to contract. Contractual notice will vary from one month to three months depending upon individual contracts."* A paragraph that hardly endorses the illusion of "consultation". At a recent meeting on 6 December 2011 to discuss the "proposal" Ms Palmer stated this paragraph had to be inserted into the letter "legally", and despite "numerous re-drafts" no-one felt it would be prudent to specify that the paragraph was required legally.

At this same meeting on 6 December, Ms Palmer referred to the Competency Based Framework for social care staff as a way for social workers to progress through the pay scales. However, what Ms Palmer failed to acknowledge was that there are only three stages to this scheme with the majority of staff already working at stage 2 and some staff

having completed the 3rd stage and therefore completing this scheme and therefore unable to achieve any further increments.

Furthermore, at this meeting Ms Palmer was at pains to emphasise that only 8 responses had been returned, regardless that the closing date is 21 December 2011, hence why you may receive a number of copies of this letter but also indicative of staffs' perception that this is not a period of consultation, rather Senior Management offering staff "lip service" for a plan they will be driving forward.

It defies belief that cabinet members would consider it appropriate to freeze the pay of Medway Council staff when, Medway Council largely runs on the goodwill of the staff, to demonstrate the goodwill; as a team we recently completed timesheets for a three weeks which showed we worked 194 hours over our contracted hours.

During the "consultation" for last years pay freeze we asked what, if any, senior management would have their pay frozen, unsurprisingly our request for this information was ignored, and it has recently reported in the local press that Neil Davies secured a 10.7% pay increase for the 2009/10 period, a copy of which is attached. How can that be justified when front line staffs are subjected to pay freezes? Again, we ask, and expect a response, as to which Senior Management is to be affected by this new "proposal"

As a Local Authority Medway have been proactive in re-assessing budgets and our overall financial commitments by under taking the "Better for Less" programme and with numerous restructures in various directorates, including Social Services which readily abandoned the "integrated" service combining Social Services and Education professionals advocated by Every Child Matters and reduced the number of social work hubs from three to two, heavily increasing the area covered by the former [REDACTED] Team, which has implications for the duration that the office is running on a skeleton staff, and an increase in mileage claims by staff, not to mention an increase in case loads and complexity of work. Changes that have been supported by staff and has not resulted in defection of staff to other local authorities.

Furthermore, when the coalition government initially announced the dramatic funding reduction all staff were asked for suggestions on ways to save money, which as a team we submitted and which included: - Senior Management to take pay cut / pay freeze; councillors payments to be reviewed; staff to be offered "perks" to offset dissatisfaction at pay freezes such as free parking in council car parks, reducing claims on subsistence to reduce dramatically and indirectly support local businesses; opportunities to "sell back" unused annual leave; review all "internal" services that Directorates are charged for; in our case foster care and respite care. We have not been asked to expand on our proposals or, to our knowledge, these suggestions been explored.

Staffs have not received an increase for the cost of fuel, despite fuel costs rocketing in recent years and Council members should also bear in mind that the national cost of living, household costs and interest rates are also increasing unfortunately our income is not.

Whilst we all appreciate the financial constraints being placed on Local Authorities by central Government, it is disappointing that the Council is considering freezing the salaries of those on the "front line" that already have highly pressurised roles and where recruitment and retention are major issues. Furthermore this ultimately may cause

financial difficulties for a number of staff, not just those on a lower wage. A recent survey undertaken by **Community Care** shows that 53% of social workers who participated in their survey have had to take second jobs to supplement their income and over half of those people admitted that the second job *"had detrimentally affected their performance in the primary post at least some of the time"*. Is this really what cabinet members want from their staff when a recent Ofsted Inspection concluded that overall Medway's Children's Services "Performs Well", Safeguarding is "Adequate" and that children in Medway are "safe".

The survey undertaken by **Community Care** also concluded that social workers have needed to raise money by selling possessions; 29% have sold their car or motorbike, 36% have sold furniture, 42% have sold electrical goods and 9% have sold their homes. We are curious what personal possessions Cabinet members and the Chief Executive have had to sell to subsidise their salary.

A recent article in *Community Care* highlighted the risks of physical and verbal abuse to social workers, citing 50% of social workers dealing with hostile and intimidating parents every week; 68% experiencing threats to their person; 67% felt dealing with hostile parents had had an impact on their work and family and 26% had experienced threats to their family (*Community care 17 November 2011*). Have these risks been considered when this proposal was formulated?

Due to the increment freeze imposed last year we now have newly qualified workers who are earning the same salary as social workers with 1 year post-qualifying experience, hardly a situation which makes staff feel valued, especially given that newly qualified staff can not hold Child Protection cases until 1 year post-qualified. Given Kent's particularly poor recent Ofsted and the subsequent additional funding being given to them by central Government it would not be surprising if a number of staff left Medway for Kent, knowing they would be financially rewarded for their hard work, rather than penalised with pay freezes. It should also be remembered that another increment freeze will impact on our Pensions, hardly the greatest pension scheme offered by any employer, but one that will be detrimentally affected nonetheless.

Even recruitment consultants are now entering into the debate regarding Social Worker's pay with an article in *Community Care* on 6 December 2011;

"Local authorities need to develop more flexible pay and reward packages for social workers in order to compete for staff in the current job market, recruitment experts have warned.

Research by resourcing and engagement consultancy TMP Worldwide has identified the key drivers in attracting and retaining both adult and children's social workers.

The report recommends that employers should be more creative in the way they design their rewards packages. In practice, this might mean:

- Allowing individuals to give up some elements of their package, such as holidays, to receive more pay;*
- Using pay as a performance inducement;*
- Continually monitoring and benchmarking pay and rewards against other authorities within an hour's drive time.*

The research, which was based on a survey completed by 769 Community Care readers, looked at how social workers perceive their employers, what rewards attract them to the job and what would persuade them to move to another organisation.

It found that employers are generally meeting children's social workers' expectations, although there is "room for improvement in terms of flexible working, holiday entitlement, administrative support and pay".

It was with a heavy heart that a number of the team decided to participate in the strike on 30 November 2011, a situation that those people have hardly considered in the past due to their commitment to the children and families of Medway.

We don't expect to receive "special treatment" but we expect to be treated as professionals and receive appropriate financial reward for the professional roles Medway Council has employed us to undertake.

Yours sincerely

See Signature sheet overleaf.

Cc: Rose Collinson, Director Children & Adults
Human Resources
Unison

Medway Council executives' remuneration

Source: Taxpayers' Alliance

Executive	Role	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
NEIL DAVIES	Chief Executive	£133,343	£154,446	£161,534	£168,622	£175,710	£182,798	£189,886	£196,974	£204,062	£211,150	£218,238	£225,326	£232,414	£239,502	£246,590	£253,678
ROSE COLLISON	Director of Children and Adult Services	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
ROBIN COOPER	Director of Regeneration and Culture	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
RICHARD HICKS	Asst Chief Learning, Training & Development	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
SIMON THROTTER	Asst Chief Planning & Design	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
STEPHEN GANISTER	Asst Chief Development, Economy & Transport	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
ANDY INGLETON	Director of Regeneration	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
NO PICTURE AVAILABLE	STEPHANIE GOAD Asst Director Communications, Performance & Partnerships	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
DEBORAH UPTON	Asst Chief Human Resources	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
MICK HAYWARD	Asst Chief Finance	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
BRIAN WEDDELL	Asst Chief Operations	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888
TRICK PALMER	Asst Chief Organisational Services	£53,343	£54,446	£55,549	£56,652	£57,755	£58,858	£59,961	£61,064	£62,167	£63,270	£64,373	£65,476	£66,579	£67,682	£68,785	£69,888

*How left the council's finances on 31st March 2021

£1.5m a year for top 12 bosses

THE top 12 staff at Medway Council shared a £93,000 pay and perks increase last year.

The figures for April 2009 to March 2010 have been unearthed by the TaxPayers Alliance, which discovered the dozen officers received £1.5 million between them last year.

Wages, pensions, expenses and other items, such as professional fees were examined.

The figures were part of a UK-wide document released by the lobbying group showing top Town Hall executives pay in every local authority.

It revealed in Medway that chief executive Neil Davies got a 10.7 per cent increase. Already the top paid official at the council, his package is now over £185,000 - well above the Prime Minister's pay.

The council's two directors, Rose Colleson and Robin Cooper, didn't fare quite as well, according to the alliance. Ms Colleson now collects over £153,000 a year.

Mr Cooper, boss of the council's billion-pound regeneration programme, earned around £111 a week less.

Clr Allan Jurest (Con), the council's chairman, said the pay levels were about right.

"We have to remember that as Medway Council becomes increasing lean the responsibility heaped on our senior officers increases considerably," he said.

"Any pay increases given to senior officers is given careful consideration, and in each case is well earned."

Clr Glyn Griffiths (Lab), the opposition finance spokesman, said: "These people are highly paid officers - so why are we paying consultants £1 million for the £100,000 these programmes in effect, the Tories are paying double for that plan. The wages of these officers are supposed to reflect their responsibilities."

Clr Geoff Jubby (Lib Dem) said: "Personally I have no issue with anyone getting over £100,000."

"There is a serious issue about whether this council actually needs a chief executive. I am trying to convince my group about that."

The council imposed a pay freeze for all staff in April 2010.

This year it has scrapped all annual increments for employees.

'I have an issue with anyone getting over £100k' - Lib Dem leader Geoff Jubby

Suggestions/alternative ways to save money

Further to our chat the other day at the presentations, I just wanted to put my idea in writing.

I know that pensions are a very touchy subject at the moment, but has it been looked into as to whether anything can be done around pensions.

My thoughts (simplistic as they may be) are that you could look to 'suspend' everyone's pensions for a year instead of an increment freeze.

In basic terms this could mean that Medway doesn't have to pay employer contributions, thus saving a significant amount of money (probably more than by freezing increments) but in addition employees don't have to pay their contributions thereby having more money in their pockets for 12 months.

It may be that you could only look at those with more than five years until retirement so that those closer to retirement are adversely affected.

It could be a win/win although it would probably be contentious

*

Many thanks for the recent information and presentation.

My main issue as a recent employee starting at the bottom band of the pay scale is the freeze will be felt long after its lifting. Is there a recovery plan to restructure pay rates to match experience, worth? On recovery of the financial climate.

*

I wish to register my dismay and alarm at the proposal to freeze increments for 2 more years.

The members or staff affected, are like me, already struggling to deal with rising costs and the decreased value of our salary. For most of us this is a serious blow to morale. One colleague tells me she burst into tears at the news. Many lower paid members of staff cannot afford to contribute to a pension and are on budgets that are so tight, they cannot save and a small emergency pushes them into debt.

My own personal situation means that I cannot hope to make up any salary deficit in future years (forecasts on the economy are quite dismal) and I am already working past state pension age in the hope of increasing my already meagre LG pension, and save a bit more. I stayed at home to bring up my children for as long as I could, returned to full time work to put them through university and my husband stayed in a job he did not much like because there was a pension - he now has that but is unable to find another job to supplement his income. We have saved whenever we could; no foreign holidays or expensive lifestyle for us, no pets or costly hobbies. We live simply and try to budget. The only bonus of being over 60 is that I no longer pay NI contributions!

A reduction in 'spending' money, as this is, has a knock on effect on the local and then the national economy. We will spend less which affects local businesses and tradesmen.

Staff do understand the implications of the need for economy and the need to continue providing services to Medway as a whole. However, Medway Council management and all the members, need to be aware that this organisation thrives on the goodwill of its employees. The majority of staff have an excellent work ethic which money cannot buy but perceived lack of consideration towards staff will see the goodwill vanish without trace. I see evidence of this in my daily rounds; disregard of hygiene in Gun Wharf, mess left at photocopiers and bin areas, litter on floor and stairs and junk in the kitchen areas. Staff moan and become resentful and stop giving their best at work. Happy staff are more productive, take a pride in their employment and save money for their employer.

I enjoy working for this council and consider myself to be lucky to have a job but I also feel that I and my colleagues are taking the brunt of these cuts simply because the wages bill is a visible entity. There are hundreds of ways to cut costs in any organisation and little savings soon add up to large savings.

I list below a few ways that savings can be made and I am sure that other staff have suggestions too. Please don't dismiss the little things, history and experience tells that they do make a difference.

1. Reduce photocopying, reduce number of photocopiers. Use spoiled paper as notepads - see No 5
2. Encourage staff to reduce refuse and perhaps even take home tins, milk bottles etc. Correct sorting of office rubbish would also help.
3. Turn down the thermostat in all the buildings and close all curtains on Friday nights/weekends to conserve heat in winter and reduce solar gain in summer
4. Lock up stationery! Make staff responsible for the items they want replaced.
5. Use scrap paper instead of notepads wherever possible.
6. Encourage staff to work smarter - a reward scheme for good ideas is known to work (the reward need not be large)
7. Stop paying overtime for Saturday work - leave it as flexi to be managed 'in house'.
8. Encourage departments to talk to each other, disseminate information and brief FL staff - saves incoming phone calls and time - time is money.
9. Turn off lights in offices when the sun is shining and turn off all lights when staff gone for the day.

*

Having attended the sessions on the incremental pay freeze and heard that this proposal is a last resort (after all other options had been considered) there are a couple of comments / ideas I'd like to put forward with regards to alternative ways of making savings...

- Has anyone reviewed the grants we pay to voluntary organisations through Adult Social Care and ensured that we are getting value for money? Can / do we evidence the effectiveness of these grants.
According to the Grant Funded survey in 10-11, the Carers First contract helped only 4 people in a survey week (the annual grant was over £43k), the Living Well in Medway contract (costing £93k) helped only 7 people in the survey week.
Tighter controls on these large grants would ensure that the money is being spent usefully; otherwise this money should be spent elsewhere.
- Has anyone scoped how much we would save if we stopped paying for external consultants / specialists who are either doing time-limited projects or are covering vacancies?

These staff cost more than regular staff because of the extra agency fees. It seems unfair that people are being put at risk / increments are frozen while these staff continue in their roles, especially given the amount they cost.

When these external resources are necessary, contracts should be linked to performance and terminated if targets are not met. I'm not convinced that these contracts are monitored in this way.

- The presentation mentioned that the increment freeze will affect everyone in the council. Is it correct that those on the teachers' scale are not affected? Did senior managers get their bonuses last year, and will they be getting bonuses this year?

I'm happy to discuss any of the above in more detail but would appreciate a reply to each of these points.

*

I quite understand the budget difficulties, the need for saving and the proposal to freeze increments once again.

However, it seems that it's all "take take take" from the employees.

What about giving something back?

- Increasing Annual Leave to 25 days after completing one year's service?

I also have issues around the parking review which has hit the lower paid hard. To make parking fair, charges should be applied right across the board - from the top down. This would bring in around 500,000 annually. It is totally unjust that the higher paid are afforded privileged parking (and why should councillors get privileged parking!!!). Have the councillors reduced their extravagant expenses?

No cost of living pay rise, no increment, higher food prices, higher household fuel prices, higher petrol prices and nothing in return.

*

To whom it may concern

Consultation response re: proposal to freeze pay increments

I am not in favour of the proposal to meet some of the Council's revenue shortfall by freezing pay increments to staff for the next two years. I fully understand the need for financial savings, but feel that the imposition of a further two years without an incremental pay increase for those on NJC contracts is unfair and does not address the underlying principles that have led to the council being in this position.

From the presentations that Neil Davies and Tricia Palmer gave, it is clear that the overall deficit is large, and that this proposal would only contribute £1.6m of the £7.8m shortfall.

In principal, I am not against a staff pay freeze to address some of the shortfall - but only where this is fair to all staff. The current proposal is not a fair one as only a proportion of the staff

employed by the council are affected - as far as I can see, the proposal will not affect any colleagues who are employed on teacher's pay and conditions, any school staff, and perhaps other colleagues not employed on NJC contracts.

In addition to the fact that the financial burden falls on only a portion of the workforce, there is unfairness even within those staff that are on NJC contracts. Staff that are at the top of their pay scale will be unaffected by the proposal, whilst those that would have received an increment will be the only staff to be impacted upon.

On a personal level, should these proposals go ahead then I will be effectively being penalised twice as I am one of the 148 employees that have lost the benefit of the 'essential car user' status that was originally a part of my contract of employment (I had travelled marginally under the 1000-mile limit). When considered in the context of large numbers of staff being totally unaffected by the proposal, this again demonstrates how unfair the proposed measures are. To avoid this situation, I would strongly urge that consideration is given to make those 148 members of staff exempt from any freeze that is imposed.

In order to reduce the deficit in the council's budget I would recommend the following:

- The use of expensive consultants is reviewed in a transparent way and reduced where possible
- The arrangements for sick pay is re-assessed in line with action taken by other authorities
- Bonus payments to senior staff are reconsidered and adjusted to reflect the current financial situation
- All staff are charged for car parking, regardless of where this is
- Funding grants for voluntary sector organisations are reduced where evidence of impact is not forthcoming

In summary - the current proposal is unfair and should not proceed. There are other areas in which savings can be made, but it is unreasonable to look to solve the issue of Medway's funding shortfall by making financial savings from only a proportion of the workforce. To do so would certainly not be in line with the Prime Minister's message that "we are all in this together".

Concerns of effect on pension

I would like to state why I feel disappointed and object to a further increment freeze. Shortly after I started my post it was regraded and I ended up at the bottom of the scale, I have recently found out that other colleagues appealed and got their place on the scale moved accordingly. I have progressed slowly but have now been stuck in the middle of the scale. As I'm 57 more increment freezes will mean that I will not progress and it will greatly affect my pension. I also was encouraged to study for the K100 with the assurance that there was to be a bar on the xxx post and you would only progress if you had the K100 qualification. I worked hard for that and was proud to get it but it was never recognised. Further more my tutor said that his other students got a monetary recognition I do appreciate that there are savings that have to be made but as a hard working front line worker who actively promotes Medway Council I now feel demoralised.

*

I am appalled that staff can be treated in such a shabby way. Surely a pay freeze is enough to satisfy anyone that Medway Council is taking measures to combat these austere times. Why an increment freeze 2 years at a time? Surely an annual review would be fairer.

I see from your email that an exception has been made for teachers. I believe that any employee 60 years old and above, should also be an exception as they have very little time left to make it to the top of their pay band. In my case, I have recently been promoted and at my interview gave assurances that I would do X Y Z, in return Medway Council said they would pay me a certain amount for these promises with annual increments until I reached the top of the pay band. I have not reneged on my side of the deal, but you have on yours. This freeze will not only affect my pay packet today, but will affect my final salary pension, which is for the rest of my life!! I am sure that the vast majority of employees would agree to this exception for the over 60's, as we all know how important our pensions are and it played a big part in why we chose to work for Medway Council in the first place. When the members are deciding on such a momentous decision that will affect people's lives forever, please remind them that they have a responsibility for their workforce as well as their electorate. A pay freeze is enough!!

*

I recently contacted HR with regarding my pension situation:

After reading the recent communication from Neil Davis on the possibility of an additional 2-year freeze to incremental pay progression, I feel concerned about the impact this will have on my future pension entitlement. I am not close to the top of my current pay scale and as I will be 65 in February 2013 it is most unlikely that I can recoup the loss of 2/4 years pay progression in my pensionable situation before retiring.

I have two questions:

- *Is any concession being considered in such cases where staff are close to retirement?*
- *Can I enhance my current contributions to boost my pension?*

HR kindly sent me information links for AVC's and advised that no concessions were currently being considered. Subsequently HR invited me to forward my above comments to you.

I would like to add that since 2004 I have worked in a variety of roles (and pay rates) for Medway Council via the Temp Desk, with one short break in service only.

In 2008 and was appointed to my current xx role. I queried the start point with HR at the time but no recognition was awarded for qualification, experience or age so I was put on the lowest point.

I accept that frozen pay and withheld incremental pay awards affect staff across the board but for older workers in my situation there appears to be an additional and unrecoverable loss of pension entitlement too.

*

I received my letter from Neil Davies and I would like to vent my disgust that once again Mr Davies along with Councillors have seen fit to freeze increments again for another 2 years and there is no mention of how many jobs this will save does that mean none?.but councillors I understand are getting there cost of living increment.

I am 58 years old and i'm on one of the lowest wage banding and once again I feel that along with everything else this Council is making my life very difficult with trying to make ends meet. And this will also have a huge impact on my pension but once again high paid employees there pension is protected. I thought when this was first told to us last year Mr Davies said as a council we would all be in the same situation but I cant seen any sign of this.

It seems to me that the highest paid are protected and the lowest paid suffer once again.

The title Better for Less I feel is such a silly title it should be called Less for Less we are not giving a better service to the public and I feel the council is expecting too much from its staff as nearly every department is working on good will and this has started to go now and employees are just so fed up and unhappy.

Staff aren't being kept in the loop as to what is going, And through the talk going around jobs are being upgraded so staff already in those jobs and are in phase 2 and 3 wont be able to go for them or if they do wont get them and I feel that is an awful way to treat loyal staff.

There is so much more that I could say but feel I can't because of job issues.

One very disgruntled and unhappy employee of Medway Council.

*

I hope also that the Council will allow the recently agreed award of increments to social workers who achieve an agreed competence to persist. It would be a bitter blow to those who have embarked on this process to see this further attempt to reward skilled and experienced staff changed once again, and another marker in regard to the Council's valuation of its workforce.

The denial of an increment, even if only for one year, has a lifetime consequence for those whose pension is based upon final salary. Foregoing one increment over a lifetime may have a relatively small, though nonetheless annoying effect, but for those approaching retirement age, the loss is greater and will be an effect for the whole of their retirement. Having twenty five years in which to offset the loss of one increment is easier to achieve than having only four or five. While I note some attempt is to be made to protect those about to retire, thought also needs to be given to those who may retire within the next few years.

*

General opposition to proposal (Unfairness/affect on moral/personal circumstances)

I feel I must put pen to paper to highlight my situation, I have always worked for the local council because I have an affinity with Medway area , I have over 26 years experience of working within communities, children and families within Medway Towns and have worked for several different sections. This has included, working for Education in both in schools and for the youth service and also as Community Development officer for Chief Executive department.

However my employment for the last 10 years and presently is as a Social Worker for Children's Services and has by far, the most important responsibilities, and is sadly the most significantly undervalued.

Because I am loyal, I have stayed in post after the council paid for my retraining to become a Social Worker and I reached the bar on my wages by progressing gradually in line with my experience year after year, receiving regular increments.

The situation now is that I appear to be being unjustly and unfairly treated and that if I remain I will continue to feel like a mug.

I have lost my cost of living increment, and my wages have been frozen, my bills are still increasing and money is tight.

But this happened after I watched the newly qualified people come into post with a golden handshake, and they were then handed top ups to their wages it appeared to me on a whim, when the salary scales were changed to the P.O. scales, it was no longer thought important that experience should be rewarded. Retainment and recruitment had both become such an issue that staff were handed wage increases just for being in post. This was after I worked alongside agency workers for years who are paid three times as much as me. I was handed nothing to keep me in post. My own enhancement was withdrawn after it had previously been acknowledged that Social Workers working in front line needed to be properly financially rewarded to keep experienced people in post.

I feel resentful that this extra money did not apply to me as I had already reached the bar by sheer hard work and loyalty.

I was then encouraged when a competency scheme was introduced for social workers to provide a portfolio proving that they were working at a higher level, and this would mean that staff who qualified for this would receive an increment in their wages. However Again this does not apply to me. I reached the bar by hard work. The bar was put there to ensure that social workers accessed post qualifying training in order that they could then receive increments again.

However not only do I not get my increments reinstated but I also have to complete an additional module (that as students we were not informed about prior to the start of the course) that has been added by the university.

My story continues: as next year I get to have my own student in my new role as student practice assessor, however yet again the one of payment of £250 which was paid to Practice Teachers previously will not reimburse to me for any extra work or pressure, which inevitably taking a student on will involve extra work.

I find myself getting more and more resentful, and I never thought I would ever consider working as an agency worker, as it seems to me to be against my principles, but I do not have any choice other than to give this serious consideration, as my money is not going as far as it used to before and I have to address this.

This situation for me is untenable.

I am presently managing a high case load in ***** Team.

If I don't change my loyal stance of remaining in Medway where I know my experience will be of best use, I will end up working until I'm 67 years old, with a reduced pension and paying higher rates, on frozen wages to pay for others to get more money as, the message to me appears to be clear.

I feel very unwanted and stupid to expect to be valued as an employee, even if I bring many years of experience to such a difficult and demanding role such as Child protection social work.

While understanding the realities of the current financial squeeze that Medway Council is facing I hope that the inequalities in pay scales that some employees are subjected to are addressed. In many instances employees are working alongside colleagues employed to do the same job but earning up to £5,000 less because they are at opposite ends of the pay scale. While this may be fine for those at the top of the pay scale it can be demoralising for those at or near the bottom for the foreseeable future.

*

Whilst I do believe that those on lower salaries should be protected, I also feel very strongly that:

- Having recently been through a restructure and had 3 SPA points removed there should be the opportunity to earn these back. Particularly as we are seeing posts advertised in other sections which allow SPA points to be retained even when changing jobs. Also being a much smaller team we are regularly working above and beyond to ensure that all services are covered, regularly working double our statutory hours.
- Last year it was proposed that there would be a 1 year increment freeze and we asked about the plan in place to prevent this happening in future years - no plan was offered.
- The increment freeze only affects a proportion of the workforce - this means that the same few individuals will shoulder the burden for 3 years running. This means that some of us are working alongside colleagues doing a similar job who have had an opportunity to accrue their increments and we will not have this opportunity. This lack of increment and SPA points will affect our pensions... In my particular case this will make a difference of £5200 on my pension and I won't be able to earn this back before the pension changes from final salary to average salary - others in the team are in the same position. In effect this will be an 8% loss of salary.

I do feel that a solution that allows us to earn back SPA points and that subjects all, except the lowest paid, to the same percentage of cuts would be much fairer.

*

I am emailing my response to the Increment Freeze Consultation and have laid my comments out below:

I think this is a very unfair way of saving money as it will only affect the percentage of staff who have not yet reached the top of their pay grade rather than all staff.

The BFL programme has already created huge savings and job losses, why should the staff be punished further by their wages not reflecting the worth their job has been valued at and the cost of living there must be better ways of countering the loss of income for staff on lower incomes, for example staff parking.

It is unfair that only some staff receive free parking and some have to pay, if all car users paid an equal amount from their wage each month then everyone would get parking and not only those classed as essential users who are on more money anyway and could afford to pay for parking.

This would then cover the cost the council lays out to provide 'some' parking and will decrease the outgoing.

As an employee that has just been appointed a new position in BFL Phase 1, I feel that as I have gained a promotion with more responsibility, my salary should reflect that. If increments are frozen, I will not move up the spine points of my grade and will be doing more work and have more responsibility for the same money that I was on previously, in comparison to colleagues of a similar level of responsibility who have already moved up the grade.

I look forward to receiving your response.

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Thank you for offering employees a chance to respond to the consultation on the proposal to freeze pay increments for a further two years.

I speak as someone that has worked in local government since I was 18, e.g. with over 18 years service.

Whilst I fully appreciate the difficult financial situation that the Council finds itself in (largely through no fault of its own), the Council should consider the overall climate for staff. Generally speaking, over the last few years:

- National pay awards have been low, with (from memory) no actual increases in the last two years for employees under NJC. This is, of course, a pay cut in real terms given inflation;
- It is not envisaged that there will be any nationally agreed pay award this year, or again in the foreseeable future;
- The increments at Medway were already frozen last year;
- It is anticipated that pension contributions will increase from 6.8% (itself an increase over recent years) to around 9.5%;
- The final salary LGPS as we know it is very likely to move across to a career average scheme from as early as 2015 for those with less than 10 years LG service;
- Future pensions will be linked to the Consumer Price Index, rather than the usually higher RPI (unless I've got this the wrong way round).

In other words, I'm being asked to work longer, for less pay, contribute more to my pension and get less in return.

Overall then, employees find themselves in a situation where we have already taken a fair amount of pain over the last few years, with further pain expected over the next few years. Whilst much of this is outside the control of the council, it should not be discounted.

With regards the specific proposal to freeze increments for the next two years, I am concerned that this will cause further financial hardship to staff. In my case, I will lose out on approximately £2400 over the next two years, making a total loss of around £4800 over the three years increments will have been frozen (assuming that I would have received an increment of £800 every year, for three years).

Employees fully realise that we are not immune to the current financial climate, and most of us accept that we have to take a share of the "pain". We do not expect preferential treatment. However, this proposal will not just cost me an extra £2400 (which could be tolerable), but is likely to affect my pension, as the final salary component of my pension is likely to be based on my salary in 2015. If this is £2400 less than it would have been (i.e. had the increments had not been frozen), that (very roughly) will cost me £600 a year of pension for every year that I live after retirement.

I must also ask the question at what point in the future will the Council have/find the £1.6 million to reintroduce the pay increments. We were asked to take these for one year, and now for a further two, but there are no guarantees offered that they will ever in fact be reinstated.

I welcome the proposal to carry out a thorough examination of pay and conditions, as there does seem to be some inequalities within the Council. Why, for example, is the Medway average pay for a Planning Officer £38,961, but for an EHO such as me £33,661. It appears to me that both are graduate professions with similar requirements to do the job, so why the pay differential? I would also query why Medway's average pay for an EHO is £33,661, but the national median is £36,276. I am, of course, biased in this respect because I am an EHO. Whilst it is possible that some Council officers are paid more than the "going rate", I would suggest that this does not apply to Environmental Health Officers.

The pay & conditions review should look at how the council pays its staff, and in particular the pay for professional officers. I currently have colleagues working under me that have professional qualifications, and have to have these to be able to do their job. In some cases, they find themselves being paid less than others (e.g. community officers) that have no formal qualifications. This is not a criticism of the pay of the CO's, but it seems to me that pay should be based on what people do, and the qualifications and experience required. Equivalent roles should receive equivalent pay. I would suggest that those roles/posts that require people to have professional qualifications should be paid more than those roles that do not. In Medway, jobs appear to have evolved over time with, in some cases, an inconsistent approach to salaries. I would ask that the review is carried out independently, preferably by an independent body/organisation.

My last point is that if the increment freeze is introduced, that senior council officers and elected members are open and transparent regarding any increases which they may receive. Whilst those outside of NJC may be fully and contractually entitled to such increments/bonuses etc., it will cause resentment amongst staff. We are, after all, told that we're "all in it together". If senior officers/members do receive additional increments etc., I would at the very least ask that staff hear about such things from the Council itself, rather than on the front page of the local paper.

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I am writing to you in the full knowledge that the Council will be going ahead with this proposal regardless of the level of concern that I or any other employees have, but I felt it was important that you understand the strength of feeling that this causes.

We were told last year that the proposed increment freeze was for one year, and was an interim measure while the necessary savings were made elsewhere, including through the Better For Less programme. At that time I did not object to the proposals, because I acknowledged the financial difficulties that the Council and indeed the wider economy were going through. However, I and many others I spoke to at the time were very sceptical that the promised "one year" freeze would turn out to be realistic.

It appears to me that the Council has acted to deceive its staff regarding the increment freeze, which you must admit is unacceptable. If the cost of the increment rise is £1.6 million pounds next year, then it will be around this amount every subsequent year. If I and many other employees could see this, then surely senior management must also have been able to anticipate it, and the failure to admit at the time that this would remain unaffordable was extremely underhanded. It would have been much more professional and ethical for the Council to place some trust in its

staff's understanding of the budget issues by being upfront about this, rather than attempting to mask the full extent of these unpleasant and unpopular measures.

I'm sure you're fully aware of just how much upheaval and distress employees have been subjected over the last few years, with more still to come, but I have listed it below as it relates to me personally:

- Review of car allowances leading to loss of essential car user status (despite the fact that my job simply cannot be done without access to and use of a car on a regular basis)
- Ongoing freeze in pay at national level (against a background of significantly rising costs of living)
- Supposed one-year increment freeze
- Star chamber process leading to job losses within my department, plus loss of support and facilities that can no longer be afforded
- Better for Less process leading to further job losses, upheaval and stress, including another tokenistic consultation exercise (with only five days allotted for all consultation responses from all departments to be considered and the final structures confirmed, it's hard to see how it was anything but)
- Office moves to make room for people from Civic Centre, resulting in anything but a more cramped and unpleasant working environment, together with the upheaval to and reduction of parking which was already unsatisfactory for many departments
- Further increment freeze now proposed
- Changes to pension provision meaning that staff will have to pay more and work longer to get less
- The prospect of further rounds of Star Chamber resulting in further job losses and cuts, as it has been confirmed through the consultation events that Better for Less alone will not deliver the required level of savings

I have worked for Medway Council for 11 years, all my adult life, and have generally found it a pleasant place to work. However, over the last year or so there has been a distinct change in atmosphere. Given the list above, which must be similar for most employees, it is not surprising that staff morale is suffering. It is also very unsatisfactory that you are choosing to impose measures that a substantial proportion of staff will remain unaffected by; not only those at the top of their grade but all teachers and school staff.

It also begs the question whether my contract is worth the paper it is written on, given that it will have been unilaterally altered three times in as many years.

In summary, I object to this proposal on the following grounds:

- It is unfair because it does not impact equally on all staff
- This need for further increment freezes should have been set out at the time the last one was proposed, instead of lying at worst or being disingenuous at best
- Staff have been asked to shoulder enough hardship over the last few years and it is time that savings were found elsewhere
- The proposal will further reduce staff morale and motivation at a time when it is already struggling
- It indicates the low value and appreciation in which senior management hold their staff

Although it is effectively the only route open to me, I have to wonder whether there any point asking for sympathy from senior management for hard-pressed and hard-working employees when there are readily available press reports confirming that the Chief Executive (whose name appears at the end of emails asking his staff to shoulder yet more hardship) has continued to accept his own, rather substantial, pay rise. Perhaps someone can confirm whether senior management are being asked to take pay freezes and cuts as well as the general staff?

I think this is a very unfair way of saving money as it will only affect the percentage of staff who have not yet reached the top of their pay grade rather than all staff.

The BFL programme has already created huge savings and job losses, why should the staff be punished further by their wages not reflecting the worth their job has been valued at and the cost of living there must be better ways of countering the loss of income for staff on lower incomes, for example staff parking.

It is unfair that only some staff receive free parking and some have to pay, if all car users paid an equal amount from their wage each month then everyone would get parking and not only those classed as essential users who are on more money anyway and could afford to pay for parking.

This would then cover the cost the council lays out to provide 'some' parking and will decrease the outgoing.

Personally I have just secured a new job through the BFL programme which now means I am responsible for the implementation of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, I will be on less of a salary than colleagues of the same job type who will have less pressure on them due to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. I am grateful to have my new job but believe I will more than earn the increments which will be due to me in this new role. I also already pay to park and with the loss of my increments it seems like a double pay cut which is very unfair when so many others don't have to pay out this money and get free parking.

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I emailed you on 13 January 2011 whenever I previously provided general objections to the proposal to freeze increments for one year.
I write again to add my personal objections to freezing increments for two additional years.

Would you please add the following to the arguments I made last time:

1. Freezing increments is a partial and unfair way of making savings from the Council's employees, affecting as it does only those, like myself, who have a contract to receive future increments. Has any study been made of the groups adversely affected by this?
2. I am personally very seriously and adversely affected by the new proposal as it means I will no longer be able to progress to the anticipated top of scale before I reach pensionable age - and will thus pay a long term penalty for this short term cut. Can the Council not make special arrangements so that such employees are not penalised twice: once through salary, and again (and again until death) through loss of pension entitlement?

13 January 2011 email received to be included with above

I write to register my concern at this proposal.

Increments are an important way of encouraging employee loyalty and avoiding the scenario, all too common in Medway, of social workers moving between authorities in order to obtain incremental (financial) advantage.

My own team is the beneficiary of employing a group of individuals who have found an area of work they enjoy and feel valued in various ways: one of which is by seeing their careers progress through the annual accrual of increments. This translates directly and in a positive way to the service that we provide, which can only be successfully achieved by people who commit - and stay - for the long term. (This is also, as we know from research, what the users of our service value above all else.)

Goodwill can be measured and demonstrated in many ways and I must tell you that without it public services such as ours will decline, and ultimately fail. Employees need to feel that their employer values them so that they can feel able to commit to a very challenging job. The goodwill that is thus created has tangible effects: I know that in my team people very frequently work beyond their contracted hours, they honour commitments at evenings and weekends, and they travel the country and stay away from home on occasions. They do this because of their commitment to their clients, to their team, and to Medway Council. I very much fear that any erosion of the goodwill that has built up over many years, that will be one inevitable effect of suspending increments, could very easily become cumulative, particularly in an environment where employees, and indeed everyone, are subjected to various financial pressures. It will then become increasingly easy and a ready temptation for social workers to turn away, to take goodwill elsewhere - to neighbouring authorities that at least can offer a replacement to the withheld increment. This is all the more likely in Medway, since the recruitment and retention of social workers takes place in an economic market where there is a shortage of well qualified and experienced staff, and where there are authorities who will be able to offer pay increases to staff tempted to move elsewhere.

In all the 24 years I have worked in Medway the one major factor that has prevented the authority being as successful as it wishes to be has been its ability to recruit, and even more to retain qualified and experienced social workers. Please do not put this to a further test. Suspending increments is a punishment that afflicts the loyal and committed and leaves the semi-detached and nomadic able to move to a higher bidder.

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I am writing to express my disappointment at the suggestion that Medway Council are considering yet another pay freeze for valuable members of staff.

I will not be supporting this proposal.

Having attended the discussions last week I noted on the presentation slides that Accountants employed by Medway Council were being paid higher than the national average/median; and that Social Workers employed by Medway Council were being paid **BELOW** the national average/median.

I am one of those who are paid less than the median salary and I have had 3 1/2 years experience; experience that I have gained in the Court arena and frontline child protection work - which I believe is valued and important work to safeguard children. But, Medway Council are obviously of the opinion that my service does not warrant remuneration that reflects the work I do.

Considerations could be made by Medway Council to not employ outside contractors to undertake work, for example, to assess time management or savings. Or to employ an outside workforce to look at the restructuring/improvement of Gillingham High Street (this I believe was completed about 2 years ago or maybe longer and cost a considerable amount of money). Surely this could be completed by those employed in higher management.

There are many agency workers employed in Children's Services and again, could not savings be made to actually employ full-time staff members.

I am unsure of Medway Council's Accounts and cannot comment further as to how I believe Medway could make savings in specific areas. If I had the time, I would delve deeper into the Accounts of Medway Council and maybe solutions could be found.

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I am currently on maternity leave and due to return to work next September, when I do return I will be forced to pay for parking, due to Fort Amherst implementing a parking fee. My current role means I have to drive my car into work as I could be called out to inspect a property or visit a client. I have recently been given the essential user allowance but this does not cover wear and tear, fuel nor business insurance.

I have already to agreed to have a 3 year pay freeze which was due to end March 2012, I can not afford to take another 2 year pay freeze when I will have to pay £40.00 per month on a parking permit. If you were to offer me free parking it would make a difference. I am being penalised for having to use my car when I could bus or walk in saving me a lot of money. I understand Council Tax has been frozen but Water, Gas and Elec etc are still rising as are childcare fees. Even with the help of the Childcare Voucher scheme I will still be at a major lose.

I am opposed to yet another pay freeze.

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I had to laugh at the irony of receiving information on a further two year increment pay freeze with an **'Investors in People - GOLD** logo at the foot of the letter. Insensitive? Not at all! I've always been rather sceptical about what this accolade means for us mere mortals - it's not much more than a marketing tool for the council if you're honest.

The wide held belief based on the communication following last year's one year increment freeze was that this would be an isolated proposal - now it seems we are becoming an easy target. Should we expect further proposals of this type for a 4th, 5th, 6th year? There is considerable disenfranchisement of council staff who I believe will lose faith and respect in Members and senior management as a result of this punitive proposal. The following article makes for interesting reading with respect to the above comment - <http://www.localgov.co.uk/index.cfm?method=news.detail&id=103610>

As a box ticking exercise, this consultation is certainly achieving an extra big tick. Again, I laughed at paragraph 5 under the heading Proposal, which stated that if it doesn't receive Union agreement you consult individually with employees and if you don't get their agreement, you will go ahead with the proposal anyway. So it's a done deal and therefore not true consultation.

And I nearly fell off my chair with laughter at Members 'understanding' of the difficult financial strain that staff are currently experiencing as a result of current economic conditions. Forgive me, but I doubt they have much understanding of the overheads that I have with:

- A two year old daughter in nursery at £500 per month

- A second child arriving in 2 weeks who will also be at nursery in 9 months time (another £500 per month)
- A 40% increase in the cost of my car insurance in the last year (in spite of a spotless driving record)
- A loss of my working family tax credits of £60 per month due to a lowering of the eligible income threshold
- A 16% rise in gas and electricity prices for the forthcoming year
- A significant increase of approximately £30 in food bills each week

I also doubt the effects of such an increment freeze on staff have really been considered fully.

I understand the economy in broad terms has received an increase in incomes of around 2.6% (<http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/bills/index.html>). Are public sector workers therefore the scapegoat, for a problem that was caused by the private sector?

The proposals are discriminatory. Only staff not at the top of their grade are affected - Is that actually legal? I'm fed up with hearing that teachers are not included because they are some kind of special case with statutory contracts. You are effectively saying and demonstrating that my contract is utterly worthless.

I also think it is an utter waste of money sending this supposed consultation out by post, whether first class or not. In terms of 'Better for Less' this exercise has completely gone against the grain. This proposal makes me ever more incredulous to the annual email we receive from Neil Davies, which passes on the heartfelt thanks of the Leader and the Leader of the opposition for all of the hard work of council staff. If that were true, perhaps the Leader and other members of the Cabinet would be seen more often talking to staff on the shop floor. I have worked for Medway Council for more than 6 years and the Leader has never spoken to me in all of that time. Its actions that count, and not just words. However, on balance I would rather have fair redress on the amount of money going into my pay packet.

A very large proportion of the council's employees live in Medway (I am not one of them). Can you tell me how the council's two core values of 'Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do' and 'Giving value for money' squares with this latest proposal of freezing staff salaries, especially of those people who live in Medway? They are your customers, as much as those people who don't work for the council. To my mind, you are failing on your core values in this regard.

Thanks ever so much in advance of taking onboard all of my comments.

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I felt it prudent that I should write to you in response to your letter dated 19th September 2011. I am extremely disappointed that the council are proposing such action and feel that I should write to you in person to express my concerns. I will also be taking this matter up with my trade union representative who will be able to represent my colleagues and I in an official capacity.

The current RPI is 5.22% and your proposals will mean that I will not receive a pay rise until April 2015 at the earliest, in effect this could mean that measured against the current RPI I will be 15.66% worse off than I am now.

I am a senior practitioner and my level of responsibility reflects this, I lead a team of Social workers and am constantly faced with extremely high-pressure situations, which require me to make, on occasions life and death decisions. I am extremely passionate about my work and give 100% at all times, as do my team. The proposal to not reward this level of commitment is not only de-moralising to me and my team but it also begs the question of "why should I?" it is very common that I work longer hours than required and regularly take work home with me. Why should I reward the community and the council with that level of commitment if my employer is not prepared to do the same in return? Good will can only go so far!

Have the council considered the cost burden that they may incur should staff leave the council to join other councils? It is a fact that recruiting externally is a more expensive process and should these proposals be enforced I wouldn't be surprised if staff seek alternative employment. Employers who do reward their staff for hard work and commitment!

I sincerely hope that you will take my concerns onboard and not implement the proposed pay cuts. There are surely areas of the business, which can be tightened so this doesn't have to be implemented. After all in a department of great importance to the welfare of children we cannot afford to be down beat and not committed. If these changes are implemented I have no doubt that this will reflect on the excellent work that my team and I do and as a knock on effect will have a detrimental effect on the families we support.

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I have been directed to discuss the increment freeze by my union, Unison.

My background is that I am a qualified Social Worker (I qualified in xxxx) and I work as a Care Manager in the Physical Disability Team.

I previously worked in Kent County Council, before leaving and coming to Medway Council in xxxx. My reasons for leaving were that I preferred the ethos of Medway Council towards the residents, and felt that they 'listened' more to the residents concerns. Also, having a Physical Disability Team was also part of my reasoning, as I have always worked with working age adults or children with disability. The needs of working age adults are very diverse, and I am able to use my social work skills more fully in this team.

However..... regarding the increment freeze. I am still in contact with other Care Managers from Kent etc. They are still doing their appraisals each year, and receiving their increments despite KCC having financial difficulties.

If the increment freeze continues, I may need to look at other options in the future, which I really don't want to have to do, particularly as I am working through my post qualifying courses.

Medway Council will be in danger of a 'brain drain' (using the 1970's term) with qualified staff leaving if this increment freeze continues, as we will have no option than to look for work elsewhere.

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Firstly, I am one of 'the lucky ones' – i.e. in the 30% already at the top of their grade – so will not be directly affected by this proposal.

However, I think that going through this rigmarole for a second year running is likely to be extremely demotivating to the majority of staff who will be affected, especially in view of all the other negative things occurring at present (e.g. restructuring under Better for Less, reductions in parking facilities, proposed re-evaluation of posts). I'm sure we all realise that since the coalition government came to power in May 2010, with its evident hatred of the public sector and, seemingly, local government in particular, future funding for local authorities was going to be severely restricted – so one must question why senior management were apparently so short sighted last year to suggest the freeze on increments would be for a single year only.

It would also be interesting to know how much it cost this year to produce a two-page letter, insert these in window envelopes and send them by first class mail to each individual employee's home address – I appreciate you needed to ensure that everyone received the communication but there must surely be more cost-effective methods than this?

Lastly, I appreciate the term 'consultation' has to be used to comply with employment legislation – but in my mind a letter titled 'consultation' that basically says 'if you don't agree we'll do it anyway' and threatens to terminate existing employment contracts is an absolute parody. Hardly a way of ensuring that you maintain a motivated, committed workforce I would suggest.

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There appears to be an air of demoralisation amongst staff members within the council at the moment. There also appears to be pointless wastage in many areas on a day to day basis which is witnessed by staff, i.e. waste of electricity, water, paper, postage, etc etc. Surely to impose a further freeze on increments will only cause further demoralisation, low moral and stress to the council's employees. Surely as an employer the council has a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its employees as its highest priority as they are the people who are delivering services to the public on a daily basis. I totally understand that there is a very great need to save money on all fronts but surely this should not be to the detriment of its own workforce.

I have been an employee of the council for 18 years and have been through several restructures during that time but do feel that some of the measures being brought into play at present are having a destructive effect on the workforce as a whole. Thank you taking the time to read this.

*

I am responding to the recent letter I have received regarding a proposal to freeze increments for a further 2 years. This letter has left me quite despondent and with a growing resentment and lack of respect for Medway Council as an employer.

Last years proposal was "sold" to us on the basis that it would save 50 jobs and the impression was given that it would be a one off. At the time I responded to the consultation that I felt it was discriminatory as it did not apply to all staff and I still feel this is the case. To be told that other groups are unaffected as they have statutory contracts is difficult to understand as I thought all contracts of employment were statutory? I would also be interested to know how many times my contract of employment can be changed without my permission as I have now lost count of the number of changes over the last 2 years, and is it equitable to expect that I could change my contract without the Council's agreement ?

Last year it was explained that the Council faced unprecedented cuts in budget and in my service we underwent a reorganisation following a 42% budget cut. For my part this meant forgoing a

pending grade review, losing 2 support staff and subsequently taking over line management for the ***** post, a post that had previously been made redundant !. This has added considerably to my workload and I currently work well in excess of my contracted hours each month, but until now have been happy to do this.

As previously said, last years proposal was made on the basis of protecting approximately 50 jobs and I have never understood why the Council have not asked whether staff would wish to discuss the option of voluntary redundancy. I would therefore be grateful for a written response as to whether the Council has considered this as an option and if so what are the reasons for not taking this course of action ?

In the current climate of "Better for Less" I was surprised to receive the letter by first class post as I would have thought a better option would have been to use internal post or for Line Managers to distribute to staff personally. Also to further save money, please do not issue me with any further contracts of employment as it will inevitably be changed numerous times in the future and clearly has no validity.

Lastly I have absolutely no confidence in the consultation process as I believe the Council will implement their proposals regardless and leaves the impression that management have no respect for the staff who had thought we were in all this together !!

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After attending the meeting at the St George's Centre I contacted my own team to let them know what transpired.

I hope that they will be writing their own thoughts and ideas regarding the freeze.

I am very disappointed that the increment is again proposed to be frozen.

As I said during the meeting I have never received an increment rise or any other rise, therefore the £250 would be greatly appreciated.

Being on a very low pay scale and not having any hope of working up the any grades is very demoralising.

I was so pleased to be given the chance to work for Medway Council, it was a new start for me and the opportunities to progress were excellent.

Two years down the line I'm still on the same salary that I started on.

Better for Less permitting I hope to stay working for Medway Council until retirement as I actually enjoy my job very much, however if the pay increases are going to be frozen for a number of years, will I be able to afford to remain in employment with the council.

I'm very happy in my role, work with a great team, and this pay freeze for the second year running feel like a kick in the teeth.

Please would you pass my thoughts on.

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In May xxxx, I took up the post of a Family Worker after 12 years working in Children's Services in an administrative support role. Two and a half years on I am only earning £1,072 more per year due to the pay freeze. This is despite obtaining NVQ 3 in Health & Social Care in the first year of being in post. I also started the K101 but deferred due to the pay freeze and the suspension of the sponsored social work scheme. The cases I am allocated are as high level as work colleagues on the top of the C2 pay scale are given.

Many of the families I work with on benefits have far more disposable income than I have. Despite this, I do not allow it to impact on the families that need my support and help.

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To continually starve staff of an annual pay award or incremental increase will in my opinion be counter productive, loss of staff morale, no incentive to go that additional mile etc. Ref my own circumstances I see no point in being persuaded by "Better for Less" Last year I saved the council 10's of thousands of pounds in utility bills but not even considered for a reward via annual pay increment despite my protestations. This year I see rises in my youngest Childs' school fees, utility bills, food costs and again no reward for my additional endeavours. Looking at the statistics in the slide show why not reduce staff year on year by 10% and reward those who remain. There are many hard workers in this council but there on the other hand there are many shirkers, get rid of them. Managers cannot manage their staff if they only on site 3 days a week, reduce the number of managers and make all posts full time (difficult I know under employment legislation but my contract has been rewritten for the past couple of years). I reiterate that why do we need 13 Asst Directors, private companies do not engage in such luxuries. Why are we paying for consultants surely senior managers employed by the council should be able to plan and develop new projects. Cut the amount spent on by highways, ensure that all road repairs are over banded so that the council do not pick up the tab for frost damage in later years. I understand from colleagues in IT that we are spending £millions on new programmes but do not have the infra structure in place to ensure that it all "runs smoothly", go round and talk to staff and ask where they see problems in their departments rather than excepting ideas from external consultants. Rant over.

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Our suggestions/comments cover two areas (*on behalf of two employees*).

The first is around special allowance payments - they should be scrapped or dramatically reduced.

At the moment special allowances are automatically given to all Service Managers, Assistant Directors, Chief Executive and Directors. These allowances are in the range of £4.6k - £8.3k.

In return for this allowance, this group of staff are expected to provide a car and insurance it for council business. It also covers private medical insurance and this element is also pensionable.

This group of staff are the highest earners yet they are still given money to buy and insure a car for council business. Not all of them really need to use the car for council business - all committees (save for full council) are held at Gun Wharf and the majority of the services are based at Gun Wharf. It seems to me that there are many staff in this category who simply use their car to drive to and from work.

Also, destinations further afield are covered by use of public transport (paid for by the council) - surely if these staff are given an allowance to buy and run a car for council business, they should be using them for the longer journeys too.

As for being given money to buy private medical insurance - why? Where is the equality in that? They are no more likely to fall ill than the rest of the staff and to be honest are no more difficult to recruit than staff further down the ladder.

Our second point is that percentage increases are unfair and serve to do nothing than **widen** the gap between the highest and lowest paid staff.

Any increase in remuneration should keep the gap the same or be a blanket figure.

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Comments relating to the proposal of £250 paid to lower paid workers

I am writing to indicate my concerns regarding a further increment freeze.

Whilst I am at the top of my pay scale and cannot receive an additional increment, I am aware of colleagues who could.

Given the rising cost of living, and wage freeze staff are effectively absorbing an ongoing and sustained period of wage cuts. The increment freeze is part of this process.

As ever the impact of wage cuts is disproportionate, and those with the lowest income are hit the hardest.

Newly qualified social workers will now have had a reward for their study and achievement - wage freeze, no increments to reflect their increased skill levels & responsibility after three years of commitment.

I hope that the council is able to find a compromise position that allows for those on lower incomes and for newly qualified social workers to receive financial support that acknowledges their circumstances.

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I am prepared to accept another 2 year pay freeze if lower paid workers is protected by a lump sum again.

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I would like to comment on the proposal by the Management to freeze increment payments for 2 years. I feel that 2 years is unreasonable especially as cost of living expenses have soared and a further 2 years could mean many of us will be on the minimum wage in real terms. The fair way would be to look at it every 12 months and a fixed payment made to staff earning less than £21,000.

*

I am very disappointed about the proposed increment freeze. I have worked for the council for just over 2 years and have never received any pay rise since I started to work for Medway Council.

At this rate, provided that I hang on to my job, I'll be earning the same salary when I retire from when I started.

I enjoy my job very much and want to continue working for Medway Council until I retire, however there is no incentive to work my way up any ladder for promotion or grade.

I earn the lowest wage as a D2 in Customer First.

When I came for the initial interview one of the incentives given to me was the increment and that the council was very keen on promotions.

Wherever I have worked either for huge organisations or small I have worked my way up the promotion ladder and achieved the highest accolade possible.

This is not likely to happen during my employment with Medway Council.

I do not want to look elsewhere as I enjoy my job very much and work with a great team, I would be happy if the £250 was offered again to the low paid workers, it would be something to help with the rising cost of living.

If you are going to freeze the increment again please freeze it for just 1 year, it seems an easy target to save money against people losing their jobs.

I hope that you will take on board my thoughts.

*

I would accept another increment freeze if there was a safety net of some sort for lower paid staff again.

*

I would like to comment on the proposal by the Management to freeze increment payments for 2 years. I feel that 2 years is unreasonable especially as cost of living expenses have soared and a further 2 years could mean many of us will be on the minimum wage in real terms. The fair way would be to look at it every 12 months and a fixed payment made to staff earning less than £21,000.

*

This is very harsh on employees working part time at the lower end of grades. Some of the staff I manage is on d2 grades on low spinal points; they are effectively earning under £8000 per annum. Many are single women increasingly unable to meet rent and cost of living rises. The lack of incremental pay and a pay freeze is very hard on them. Unlike some private sector workers we do not have a bonus scheme each year either. Where is the incentive for staff to give their full commitment to work?

<p>Directorate</p> <p>Business Support</p>	<p>Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change</p> <p>Proposal to freeze increments for 2 years from April 2012 – Employee Consultation</p>		
<p>Officer responsible for assessment</p> <p>Tricia Palmer</p>	<p>Date of assessment</p> <p>7 September 2011</p>	<p>New or existing?</p> <p>New</p>	
<p>Defining what is being assessed</p>			
<p>1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives</p>	<p>The council has an established process for setting its budget for the next financial year; one of the first stages in this involves updating the council's medium term financial plan each year. This document looks forward at the key factors that affect the council's budget for the next three years. This was discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 6 September 2011.</p> <p>It is clear that the financial arrangements for the Council continue to be extremely difficult and this will continue in the medium term. The funding gap for the next financial year is projected at £9.5 million after taking into account some efficiencies and savings and assumes a council tax increase of 2.5%. In addition the cost of incremental progression continues to run at around £1.6 million per year. The Medium Term Financial Plan currently includes no increase for pay and therefore relies on no overall increase in the pay bill, which for all staff is £215 million, of which £125 million is for services funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with the remaining £90m being borne through council tax and other grant. It is worth noting that every 1% increase in the council tax component is therefore some £900,000 additional pressure against the £9.5 million deficit. The signs are that nationally there will not be a cost of living award next year, although the trade unions intend to make a claim.</p> <p>As it is clear that the financial position of the Council will not improve in the medium term it is proposed that incremental progression is frozen from April 2012 for 2 years. This means that staff due an incremental pay increase would no longer receive that increase in pay in 2012/13 and 2013/2014. This would save approximately £1.6m from the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 council budgets.</p> <p>There are currently 851 (30.45%) employees on the top of their grade, therefore 1944 (69.55%) staff are potentially impacted upon as a result of these proposals. It should be noted that turnover is approximately 13% a year and this should be taken into account when reviewing figures presented.</p>		

2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	Savings are intended to be achieved in a way that ensures financial sustainability whilst not disproportionately impacting on or unfairly disadvantaging any sections of the community.	
3. What outcomes are wanted?	That the Council continues to deliver vital services to customers whilst at the same time managing reductions to funding and functioning as a sustainable organisation continuing to focus on priorities and providing effective services. Obviously, this proposal will have detrimental impact on the earning capacity of those workers who are due an incremental rise next financial year. This proposal is being considered as a way of delivering savings which goes some way to sharing the impact equally across the organisation.	
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	<p>Contribute</p> <p>Good analysis of the proposals Effective consultation Clear communication of proposals</p>	<p>Detract</p> <p>Decisions made without full analysis and discussion</p>
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	All Staff and Members	
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	Senior Management Team	
Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial/ethnic groups</i>?	YES	
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	<p>The analysis of staff who could be expecting to receive an increment this year demonstrates that of the 1944 staff that may be impacted upon 90.02% are from a white ethnic group and 9.98% are from a BME group.</p> <p>The last workforce monitoring information for April 2011 for non-schools staff shows that 8.81% of staff were from a BME group. The potential figure for BME staff that might be impacted upon by this proposal is higher than 8.81%, at 9.98% and this should be examined as part of the consultation process.</p>	

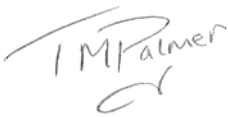
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?	YES													
	NO													
What evidence exists for this?	<p>The analysis of staff who could be expecting to receive an increment this year demonstrates that of the 1944 staff who may be impacted upon 2.53% are recorded declaring themselves as disabled.</p> <p>The last workforce monitoring information (April 2011) for non schools states that 3.51% of staff were declaring themselves as disabled. The percentage likely to be impacted upon is slightly lower.</p>													
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?	YES	Possibly												
	NO													
What evidence exists for this?	<p>The analysis of staff who could be expecting to receive an increment this year demonstrates that of the 1944 staff that may be impacted upon 72% are women and 28% men. This is slightly higher for men than the last workforce information shows for non-schools staff. In April 2011 70.6% of the non-schools workforce were women and 29.4% were men.</p>													
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?	YES	Do not know												
	NO													
What evidence exists for this?	We do not currently hold sufficient information to be able to do any reliable comparison.													
11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?	YES	Do not know												
	NO													
What evidence exists for this?	We do not currently hold sufficient information to be able to do any reliable comparison.													
12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's <i>age</i>?	YES	Possibly												
	NO													
What evidence exists for this?	<p>The analysis of staff who could be expecting to receive an increment this year demonstrates that of the 1944 staff who may be impacted upon by age bands shows the following:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Those affected:</td> <td>Current Workforce:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29 and under = 22%</td> <td>29 and under = 17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 – 39 = 20%</td> <td>30 – 39 = 18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40 – 49 = 27%</td> <td>40 – 49 = 27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50 – 59 = 23%</td> <td>50 – 59 = 28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60 and over = 8%</td> <td>60 and over = 10%</td> </tr> </table>		Those affected:	Current Workforce:	29 and under = 22%	29 and under = 17%	30 – 39 = 20%	30 – 39 = 18%	40 – 49 = 27%	40 – 49 = 27%	50 – 59 = 23%	50 – 59 = 28%	60 and over = 8%	60 and over = 10%
Those affected:	Current Workforce:													
29 and under = 22%	29 and under = 17%													
30 – 39 = 20%	30 – 39 = 18%													
40 – 49 = 27%	40 – 49 = 27%													
50 – 59 = 23%	50 – 59 = 28%													
60 and over = 8%	60 and over = 10%													

	This does indicate that younger employees will be subject to a greater impact than older employees.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i>?	YES	Do not know
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	We do not have information upon which to undertake any analysis	
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. speakers of other languages; people with caring responsibilities or dependants; those with an offending past; or people living in rural areas)?	YES	Possibly
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	There may be greater impact on lower paid employees and this will be considered as part of the consultation process.	
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?	YES	
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	N/A	

Conclusions & recommendation		
16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?	YES	The consultation process is an opportunity to investigate possible disproportionate impact on particular groups.
	NO	
17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	YES	
	NO	
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO, BUT ...	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?	
YES	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA	A full impact assessment is envisaged as part of the consultation process. This screening raises areas for further consideration during that period; these are set out in the action plan below.

	Guidance Notes)	
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Action plan to make modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible
Comparative data in relation to age.	More detailed analysis in relation to age.	Paula Charker
Clarity about potential for disproportionate impact on certain 'protected categories'	Consultation with the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Workers Forum • Disabled Workers Forum • LGBT Forum Consider any differential impact on the lowest paid employees	Paula Charker
Improve monitoring of all protected categories across the council to assist with future exercises	Continue to encourage staff to complete equality monitoring via Self Serve 4 You	HR Services Senior Managers

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review		
Date of next review		
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)		
Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?		
Signed (Assistant Director)	Date	
	9 September 2011	

DIA Proposed freezing of Increments November 2011Total staff group **2819** (Minus duplicate posts)Total proposed affected staff **1924** (2010/11 2056)**1.0 - Breakdown by Protected Characteristics****1.1 – Ethnicity**

	White British/Irish/Other	BME	Other
Those affected	1744/1924 = 91%	143/1924 = 7%	37/1924 = 2%
Total staff group	2579/2819 = 91%	187/2819 = 7%	53/2819 = 2%

1.2 - Gender

	Female	Male
Those affected	1399/1924 = 73%	525/1924 = 27%
Total staff group	2037/2819 = 72%	782/2819 = 28%

1.3 - Age

	16-24	25+
Those affected	153/1924 = 8%	1771/1924 = 92%
Total staff group	155/2819 = 5%	2664/2819 = 95%

1.4 - Disability

	Yes	No	Blank/Not stated
Those affected	51/1924 = 3%	1851/1924 = 96%	22/1924 = 1%
Total staff group	94/2819 = 3%	2697/2819 = 96%	28/2819 = 1%

1.5 – Religion (Where declared by employee)

	Christianity	Buddhism	Atheist	Sikh
Those affected	16	1	6	0
Total Staff group	24	2	8	2

	Agnostic	Other	Prefer not to answer	Not stated
Those affected	2	1	9	1889
Total Staff group	3	1	11	2768

1.6 - Sexual Orientation (Where declared by employee)

	Heterosexual	Gay	Prefer not to answer	Not stated
Those affected	31	2	3	1888
Total staff group	43	3	4	2769

1.7 - Marital status (Where declared by employee)

	Single	Married	Divorced
Those affected	651	878	127
Total staff group	801	1396	198

	Widowed	Separated	Civil Partnership	Not Stated
Those affected	14	45	8	201
Total staff group	26	61	9	328

2.0 - By grade

	C2, C1, D2	D1, E2, E1
Those affected	961/1924 = 50%	166/1924 = 8%
Total staff group	1345/2819 = 47%	277/2819 = 10%

2.1 - Ethnicity by grade

C2, C1, D2

	White British/Irish/Other	BME	Other
Those affected	875/961 = 91%	65/961 = 7%	21/961 = 2%
Total staff group	1237/1345 = 92%	83/1345 = 6%	25/1345 = 2%

D1, E2, E1

	White British/Irish/Other	BME	Other
Those affected	152/166 = 92%	9/166 = 5%	5/166 = 3%
Total staff group	258/277 = 93%	12/277 = 4%	7/277 = 3%

2.2 - Gender by grade

C2, C1, D2

	Female	Male
Those affected	750/961 = 78%	211/961 = 22%
Total staff group	1054/1345 = 78%	291/1345 = 22%

D1, E2, E1

	Female	Male
Those affected	103/166 = 62%	63/166 = 38%
Total staff group	189/277 = 68%	88/277 = 32%

2.3 - Age by grade

C2, C1, D2

	16-24	25+
Those affected	81/961 = 8%	880/961 = 92%
Total staff group	83/1345 = 6%	1262/1345 = 94%

D1, E2, E1

	16-24	25+
Those affected	38/166 = 23%	128/166 = 77%
Total staff group	38/277 = 14%	239/277 = 86%

2.4 - Disability by grade

C2, C1, D2

	Yes	No	Blank/Not stated
Those affected	24/961 = 2%	929/961 = 97%	8/961 = 1%
Total staff group	42/1345 = 3%	1293/1345 = 96%	10/1345 = 1%

D1, E2, E1

	Yes	No	Blank/Not stated
Those affected	3/166 = 2%	160/166 = 96%	3/166 = 2%
Total staff group	8/277 = 3%	266/277 = 96%	5/277 = 2%

2.5 - Religion by grade

C2, C1, D2

	Christianity	Buddhism	Atheist	Sikh
Those affected	5		5	
Total Staff group	9		6	1

	Agnostic	Other	Prefer not to answer	Not stated
Those affected	1		6	944
Total Staff group	1		6	1322

D1, E2, E1

	Christianity	Buddhism	Atheist	Sikh
Those affected				
Total Staff group				

	Agnostic	Other	Prefer not to answer	Not stated
Those affected				166
Total Staff group			1	276

2.6 - Sexual Orientation by grade

C2, C1, D2

	Heterosexual	Gay	Prefer not to answer	Not stated
Those affected	14		3	944
Total staff group	18	1	3	1323

D1, E2, E1

	Heterosexual	Gay	Not stated/Prefer not to answer
Those affected	1		165
Total staff group	2		275

2.7 - Marital status by grade

C2, C1, D2

	Single	Married	Divorced
Those affected	326	450	61
Total staff group	394	662	106

	Widowed	Separated	Civil Partnership	Not Stated
9	23	5		87
15	28	5		135

D1, E2, E1

	Single	Married	Divorced
Those affected	75	65	8
Total staff group	95	126	16

	Widowed	Separated	Civil Partnership	Not Stated
3	3			12
4	6			29

3.0 - Impact on Part-timers

	Total Number	# Part-time	Percentage %
Those affected	1924	705	37%
Total staff group	2819	1114	40%

3.1 - Impact on Part-timers by gender

	Total Number		# Part-time		Percentage %	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Those affected	525	1399	103	602	15%	85%
Total staff group	782	2037	156	958	14%	86%

Diversity Impact Assessment: Full Assessment Form

(for use after DIA screening has identified concerns that unfair access or differential impacts of function, policy, major service change or strategy may exist)

Directorate Business Support	Name of Service Change/Policy/Function												
	Proposal to freeze increments for two years from April 2012 – Employee Consultation												
Officer responsible for assessment		Assessment date	New or existing?										
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services		21 December 2012	New										
Identify potential issues and factors													
1. In regard to which groups are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact?	Race	Religious belief	Trans-gendered transsexual	or									
	Disability	Age ✓	Other (specify)										
	Gender	Sexual orientation											
2. What differential impact do you think there <u>could</u> be on this/these group(s)?	<p>See appendix 3 (a). The data indicates that there could be a differential impact due to people's age in particular those on the lower grades. D1, E2 & E1 as follows:</p> <p><u>D1, E2, E1</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>16-24</th> <th>25+</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Those affected</td> <td>38/166 = 23%</td> <td>128/166 = 77%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total staff group</td> <td>38/277 = 14%</td> <td>239/277 = 86%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					16-24	25+	Those affected	38/166 = 23%	128/166 = 77%	Total staff group	38/277 = 14%	239/277 = 86%
	16-24	25+											
Those affected	38/166 = 23%	128/166 = 77%											
Total staff group	38/277 = 14%	239/277 = 86%											
Map existing data													
3. What existing evidence do you have for this - e.g. take-up, complaints?													
Information/data	When collected	Source	Strengths of data (e.g. up-to-date)	Gaps									
Data	November 2011	Resourcelink	Up-to-date	Gaps are in the data collected for some of the Protected Characteristics such as Transgender, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief. This is due to staff not willing to complete their personal details.									

4. What are implications of the gaps in evidence (e.g. people with visual impairments do not know about council services)?	Full reporting and impact assessment is not possible.
5. What is the key question you want answered, and by whom.	

Formal Consultation

6. Are there any experts/ relevant groups who you could approach to ask their views on the issues?	YES	Consultation has taken place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff - trade unions - staff forums.
	NO	
7. Have you discussed your consultation request with Research and Review?	YES	
	NO	

8. Describe in detail the views of the relevant groups/experts on the issues.

The Trade Unions are prepared to commence negotiations on a collective agreement for 12 month increment freeze on the basis that all staff on £21,500 or under receive a payment of £250.

The Trade Unions requested that data broken down by part-time and all other Protected Characteristics be included.

9. What options, alternatives or reasonable readjustment(s) have been considered?

Conclusion and recommendations

10. In your own words, briefly state what changes (from the customers' point of view) are reasonable adjustments to make access fair.

Target setting		
Outcome	Actions (with completion dates)	Measure of progress

Signed (officer responsible for achieving above DIA actions)		Date
Signed (completing officer/service manager)		Date
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)		Date