

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN ROOM 27,  
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON MONDAY 21  
OCTOBER 2013, AT 2.00 PM

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PRESENT:     **Employer's Side**

Andy Stevenson (Chairman)  
Councillors M Alexander, L Haysey and  
A Jackson

**Staff Side (UNISON)**

Mr S Ellis and J Francis

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors J Ranger

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Glenda Bennett	- Interim Head of People and Property
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

10     **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that Minutes of the meeting held on 3  
September 2013 be approved as a correct record and  
signed by the Chairman.

11     **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated that no reports had been submitted by  
the Secretary to the Employer's Side.

12     **REVISION OF COUNCIL'S PAY AWARD POLICY**

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report requesting

that the reduction in Local Award which was introduced as part of the Terms and Conditions review, be suspended.

The Secretary to the Staff Side presented a report to the Panel on the Council's Local Award scheme and a proposition that the current scheme be reviewed in light of the current economic situation and the effect this is having on living standards for staff. The Secretary to the Staff Side requested that, in the light of these reductions, the Council cancel plans to reduce the Local Award and allow all employees to receive the 1% pay increase negotiated earlier this year, without a reduction of the Local Award and for staff to receive in full any future national pay awards.

Councillor A Jackson thanked the Secretary to the Staff's Side for the report. He acknowledged the difficult economic times and of the need to find a balance. Councillor Jackson stated that by 2020 it is highly likely that the proportion of our funding received from Central Government would have significantly reduced. As a way forward, Councillor Jackson suggested that Officers be asked to take a closer look at the figures within the overall context of the budget and to report back on options for further consideration by the Panel.

The Secretary to the Staff Side suggested that a proportion of the salary savings already achieved be divided between staff as a bonus for their loyalty. He further suggested that the Council cancel plans to reduce the Local Award to allow employees to receive any pay increases.

Councillor A Jackson's suggestion was unanimously supported.

RESOLVED – that Officers review the options available within the context of the Council's budget and report back to the next Local Joint Panel meeting with options and figures for a way forward.

### 13 INCREASE PAY GRADE FOR STAFF UP TO GRADE 5

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report seeking an amendment to the Council's pay scales in adjusting grades for

staff on grades 1-5 to enable progression to the next spinal column point (SCP), the details of which were set out in the report now submitted and Essential Reference Papers.

The Secretary to the Staff Side explained that staff on higher salaries always tended to benefit by percentage increases when compared to those on a lower salary and that increased the gap in earnings. The Secretary to the Staff Side asked that all staff on grades 1 to 5 and at the top of the grade be allowed to progress on to the next grade and all other grades up to grade 5 follow the same process migrating to grade 6 once the top of grade 5 had been reached.

The Secretary to the Staff Side explained that all Unison Members had been provided with a copy of the report and 96.6% of those Union members who had voted were in favour of it.

Councillor A Jackson queried whether it was premature at this point in time to consider this particular issue in the light of national negotiations taking place.

The Interim Head of People and Property Services explained that the salary grades had been the subject of an agreement with Unison in 2001 and that pay was worked out on the basis of a job evaluation. She added that what was being proposed, would compress the grading system and could potentially raise issues in terms of pay. The Interim Head of People and Property Services explained the difficulties of negotiating at a local level when discussions were taking place at a national level.

Councillor J Ranger referred to the Council's acceptance of national agreements and that Staff had received a 1% pay award and agreed with Councillor Jackson that to consider this matter now would be premature until the national negotiations had concluded. He stated that many Authorities had removed automatic progression and had cut pay through all grades.

The Secretary to the Staff Side explained that what was being overlooked was the fact that staff were not feeling the benefit

of any pay award because of the phasing out of the local award scheme. He felt that there might be a number of employees who request for their grades to be reassessed.

Councillor A Jackson reiterated that he felt that there may be scope in terms of reviewing the Council's Local Award discussed earlier, but that it was premature to consider the issue as a national solution might resolve the issue. He added that processes were in place for staff to seek job evaluations if they wished.

The Director of Finance and Support Services stated that the Panel needed to take on board the implications of proposals on staff and the Council in terms of shared service arrangements. She reiterated the difficulties in terms of negotiating pay awards locally when negotiations were already taking place nationally.

Councillor A Jackson suggested that the matter be deferred in the light of ongoing national pay discussions and that the matter be reviewed following the conclusion of those negotiations when further information was available. This was supported.

RESOLVED – that (A) the matter be deferred in the light of ongoing national pay discussions and

(B) the issue of pay for grades 1 – 5 be reviewed following the conclusion of national negotiations when further information was available.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Chairman .....

Date .....