

Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee

Subject: Current staffing issues (Standing Item)

Date: 16 November 2021

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1. Purpose of the Report

This is an information item highlighting to the Committee, any issues of particular interest that relate to the council's workforce.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note this report.

3. Summary of current issues

3.1 National Pay Award

The Staff Side for the NJC (the terms and conditions under which most staff of the council are employed) has rejected the final offer made by Employers of a 1.75% pay rise. UNISON members voted 79% to 21% to reject; GMB members voted 75% to 25% to reject. The unions are all now in the process of conducting industrial action ballots.

In respect to Chief Executive and Chief Officer pay, the National Employers made final pay offers of 1.50% to both groups. Both the respective Staff Sides rejected the final offers and asked the employers to reconsider and instead meet their claims for "equality of treatment with the generality of local government staff".

The National Employers' response was to reaffirm their final pay offers and urged the Staff Sides to accept them.

For industrial action ballots the law requires that there is a ballot of employees in accordance with strict legal requirements before industrial action is called for or endorsed. Only where such a ballot produces a majority in favour of industrial action and at least 50% of those eligible to vote have voted will the action be lawful. The ballot will only be effective for and mandate industrial action that takes place within six months, beginning with the date of the ballot (which is the date the ballot closes).

In previous disputes, all three unions have balloted members on an aggregated basis. This means that to take action, 50% of their national memberships were required to vote. This time, it may be likely that one or more of the unions may operate on a disaggregated basis. This means that action could be taken at each

organisation where a turn-out of over 50% is secured (if members vote in favour strike action).

3.2 Employee Conference

This year's employee conference was held in the Bonington Theatre. The theme was equality and diversity (and titled, "how we treat each other"). A drama-based training company was commissioned to deliver the event which used sketches performed by actors together with Q&A sessions with those actors still "in character" to bring out behaviours that will and won't be acceptable at work.

Feedback confirmed that the event delivered its objectives effectively.

3.3 Employee Survey

The Council undertakes a staff survey every two years. This has just closed. The return rate was good at around 42% of staff contributing and this time, due to changed methodology there has been an excellent return from colleagues in PASC and Waste. Information about the survey results will come to a future meeting of this committee.