

Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee

Subject: Current staffing issues (Standing Item)

Date: 29 August 2023

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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

Background:

National pay award changes apply from 1 April each year. It is often now the case that settlement is achieved some months after the application date.

On 30 January this year a pay claim for NJC employees (most employees of our Council) was tabled by UNISON, GMB and UNITE for an award of:

- RPI (10.7%)+2% on all grades; so a pay rise of 12.7%
- A minimum rate of £15 (our current local minimum is £11.18)
- Other changes to terms and conditions including a reduction in the working week by two hours, additional welfare leave and application of a home working allowance.

The JNC for Chief Executives has also submitted a pay claim for a rise in salary not less than the equivalent to the percentage award that will be applied the top pay point in the national NJC scale.

For the JNC for Chief Officers the claim was for a pay rise of RPI+2% and an additional two days' leave.

Currently, settlement has not been achieved for any of the groups other than Chief Officers (for our Council this means Directors and Heads of Service) for whom a national pay offer of 3.5% has been accepted by the Employees' Side.

The Employers' Side has made a "full and final offer" to NJC employees of an increase of £1,925 per annum (pro rata for part time).

Current position (at time of writing committee papers; 9 August):

GMB has confirmed it will conduct disaggregated industrial action ballots of its NJC 'Green Book' members in some councils. The organisations to be targeted for strike ballots will be notified in the next few weeks, in line with the requirements of legislation.

The strike ballots will open on 12 Sep and close on 24 Oct (eight months after the National Employers' unanimous, full and final pay offers were made on 23 Feb).

As notified previously, UNISON's strike ballots closed on 4 July. Legislation requires that industrial action can only be taken where a turnout of 50% or more is achieved with a majority voting for action. This threshold was passed in a number of employers but most of these were smaller employers. Consequently, UNISON is now awaiting the outcome of Unite's strike ballots (the last of which close tomorrow, Fri 28 Jul) before announcing its next steps. Both unions are expected to signal their intentions during August.

The position relating to Chief Executive's pay is also still to be determined with no progress currently being made.