

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET 11 APRIL 2017 FROM THE MEETING OF THE JOINT EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE – 27 MARCH 2017

7 PAY AWARD 2017/2018

The Executive Director presented the report and explained that the Council's annual pay increase for all employees was locally determined having regard to national pay and labour market information and was a continuation of the Government's 1% target for public sector pay alongside a gradual increase in the overall level of any pay settlements within the economy as a whole and the two year National Pay settlement agreed in 2016.

The Executive Director drew the Committee's attention to the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Mrs Mellish congratulated both officers and Unison for the way in which they had worked together in relation to revision of the PG12 grade and progression criteria.

Louise Gayton informed the Committee that she had sent the report out to staff for comments in the normal manner, and explained that staff appeared to be resigned to this award. She made reference to the fact that inflation was at 3% and there had been an increase in Council Tax. She explained that some members of staff with families were relying far more on tax allowance and changes to childcare rather than their pay increase. It was also explained that there was a discrepancy at the top and bottom of the grades. She added that Unison accepted the award as it was but it did not meet the needs of staff.

The Leader commented that there had been years where staff had received no increase. He appreciated that inflation did eat into people's money particularly petrol and food and the increase in Council Tax. He added that the Council was going the best it could for those staff on the bottom grades. Consideration would also need to be given to look at how the PG12 grade would work.

Louise Gayton also explained that as the lower wages were increasing by more than 1%, concerns had been raised by some staff on grades 10 and 11 that the gap between the grades was decreasing, particularly for those with qualifications and experience. She considered that the whole scheme needed to be considered.

Ivan Mercer asked whether a feasibility study had been carried out on a real living wage. The Executive Director explained that she was aware of another authority which had carried this out and implemented it however they did not employ leisure staff or grounds maintenance staff.

In relation to apprenticeships it was explained that changes would come into effect from 1st April 2017 and the Council would be able to offer existing staff apprenticeships. Priority would be given to those staff who were moving from

a PG13 to PG12. The apprenticeship in most cases offered day release courses to college, and the Council was currently in discussion with the College of West Anglia.

The Leader explained that the apprenticeships tied in with 'grow your own', which encouraged young people who had grown up in the area to work for the Council and following training would stay working with the Borough Council.

It was explained that the post entry qualification scheme was a 2 year pay-back period for any courses paid for by the Borough Council, and there would be something similar for apprenticeships.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Employee Committee noted and agreed the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

1. That an annual pay award of 1% be implemented with effect from 1st April 2017.
2. That Pay Grade PG13 be removed from the Authority's pay scales and that staff be assimilated to PG12 with a minimum pay rate of £7.78 per hour.
3. That staff on the revised grade of PG12 progress through the grade subject to the achievement of a specified NVQ level 2 qualification / apprenticeship in an agreed subject, demonstration of specified qualities/criteria as relevant to the post or demonstration of a willingness to work more flexibly (eg by working in different teams or at different sites).