

UNISON thanks management for the opportunity to respond to the Report regarding the Pay Award for 2017/18. Union members have been consulted and their responses have been amalgamated into this overall response.

We note that the Council is recommending a 1% pay award for staff from 1st April 2017 and a raise in the minimum wage to £7.78 per hour for staff on the lowest grade. We also note that the PG13 has now been abolished with changes to the PG12 grade to cope with this change.

Yet this cannot in anyway be considered a 'pay rise'. Inflation is sitting at around 3% and the Council Tax increase this year is the largest for quite some years. Yet again, staff are left in a position of actually having less money than before. Many of our staff will be relying more on the changes to the Tax Allowance, and for those with young families the changes to free childcare provisions, than they can on their employer to provide a living wage increase.

UNISON fully understands the financial position the Council faces but there is still a problem with the differentials higher up the grade scale. The continual, and necessary, improvement to the lowest paid salaries is eroding the salaries above and starting to raise concerns among staff that their qualifications/experience are not as valued as once they were. The fact that for certain grades a 1% increase is actually 4 or 5 times that of our lowest paid staff must be addressed. This should never be a race to the bottom but UNISON feels that there is still work to be done around those 'middle grades'.

Staff have also raised concerns and questions around how the changes to the PG13 and 12 grades will take place. These will be addressed separately to Management but it was felt that it should be noted that queries have been raised.