

UNISON thanks management for the opportunity to respond to the Report regarding the Pay Award for 2018/19. Union members have been consulted and their responses have been amalgamated into this overall response.

We note that the Council is recommending a 2% pay award for staff from 1st April 2018 and a raise in the minimum wage to £8.50 per hour for staff on the lowest grade.

Whilst most of our members are relieved that we have come away from the 'austerity' increases of 1% or less which have decimated pay packets over the last 10 years there are also feelings that this really is too little, too late.

Council Tax has leapt this year and inflation is sitting at between 3% and 4%. This pay rise will not cover those increased expenses and as is often the case staff will rely more on changes to the tax allowance and an improved 'free' childcare scheme for working parents. All things being equal though, many staff will still be worse off at the end of each month.

Whilst UNISON understands the financial position the Council is in, there remains a problem with the differentials higher up the grade scale. It is vital that the lowest end of the pay scale continue to rise as the impact of these increases will be felt most keenly. However, the actual effect of the increases on the grades immediately above means that for some staff their pay packet no longer shows a justifiable differential – even though these staff may have qualifications/skills or experience which were a requirement of the role in the first place. Our casual staff will see this most immediately and UNISON is concerned about the ability to recruit casual team leaders/supervisors when the differential between their pay and that of those they will supervise is so low.

Going forward UNISON would like to see a full review of the grading structure to ensure that this game of 'catch up' ceases to be an issue year in, year out. We would also like to see some kind of flexibility in budget setting around the pay award.