

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

JOINT EMPLOYEE COMMITTEE

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Joint Employee Committee held on
Tuesday, 12th October, 2021 at 1.00 pm in Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT:

Councillors: Councillors Dark, Middleton, Kunes and Blunt.

Officers:

Lorraine Gore – Chief Executive
Debbie Gates – Executive Director
Becky Box – Assistant Director

Union Representatives: Tina Underwood, Louise Gayton and Cameron Matthews

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: Councillor Dark was appointed Chair for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: Tina Underwood was appointed Vice Chair for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

4 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

5 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (IF ANY)**

There was none.

6 **PAY AWARD 2021-2022**

Debbie Gates, Executive Director presented the Cabinet Report as included in the Agenda. She reminded those present that the pay increase was locally determined but took into consideration the national

pay award. However, the national pay award had not yet been determined and it was important for the Council to move forward with implementing the 2021/2022 pay award.

Discussions with SMTU had been held in advance of the meeting and it was explained that the proposal being put to the Cabinet was an annual pay award of 2.5% to be implemented with effect from 1st April 2021 and this would include the 'catch up' percentage of 0.25% which was agreed following the outcome of the national pay negotiations for 2020/2021.

The Executive Director also highlighted the recommendations within the report which proposed that the bottom of the PG scales be increased to the lowest point on the national pay scales if they exceeded the Borough Council's lowest pay point when the national pay award was agreed, and that staff be granted an additional day of annual leave to take on 24th December 2021.

Those present were reminded that these were the proposals for the 2021/2022 pay award and if agreed would be reflected in December pay slips.

The Chair, Councillor Dark reminded the representatives from the Trade Unions that they had discussed proposals previously and hoped that they would be well received by staff. He explained that he had asked for the additional days leave for Christmas Eve as a way to say thank you to staff for their hard work and to recognise their commitment during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

He explained that the 2.5% increase was within budget and a Special Cabinet meeting had been arranged for 20th October 2021, to ensure that the pay award could be implemented before Christmas.

Cameron Matthews provided detail of the Unison national consultation ballot, which had been rejected and the impact of National Insurance and Inflation increases. He indicated that he would like to see the 0.25% catch up percentage in addition to the 2.5% pay increase, although he acknowledged the pressures on Council finances. Louise Gayton reiterated the comments made by Cameron Matthews and asked the Council to consider the impact of increasing utility prices. She also asked that consideration be given to reviewing the Councils pay scales and pay erosion.

Those present were reminded that the pay award being considered was for 2021/2022 and influences such as increased costs of living, national insurance, inflation and utilities would be part of the considerations for the 2022/2023 pay award.

The Union representatives were informed that if an award over 2.5% was awarded, this would exceed the council's budget provision and would delay the implementation of the award as this would require

additional budget approval. The pay award would not be able to be implemented before Christmas. It also was not possible to implement two staggered increases in this financial year as this would have an impact on pay roll processing in terms of timescales and costs and again additional budget would require approval which would not be possible until budget setting February 2022 and would not be possible to be paid during 2021/22.

Louise Gayton referred to the proposal that staff be granted an additional day of leave for Christmas Eve and she thanked the Administration for this stating that it was really appreciated by staff and had a positive impact on staff morale.

Tina Underwood acknowledged the impact a higher percentage would have on budgets and timescales and commented that it was important that the process for 2021/2022 was not delayed any further.

Tina Underwood also commented that she would like to hold discussions at a future meeting on in house career progression and the Chair explained that retention of staff and progression opportunities was something the Cabinet were looking at and could be brought to a future Joint Employee Committee Meeting.

The Executive Director reminded those present that it was just the pay award that was determined locally, all other conditions of service were agreed nationally. She also explained that the Council did not engage in local negotiations, but discussed proposals at a local level.

The Executive Director explained that Union comments could be appended to the Cabinet report after this meeting. The Union representatives confirmed that the paper they had produced previously should be appended to the Cabinet report for the meeting on 20th October 2021. Louise Gayton explained that in order to not delay the process it would not be possible to go back to Union Members for their comments following this meeting.

The Chair referred to the recommendations set out within the report and the Union representatives thanked the Chair for giving them the opportunity to discuss the proposals. It was also noted that discussions for the 2022/2023 pay award would start as early as possible.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Employee Committee support the proposals to Cabinet as follows:

1. That an annual pay award of 2.5% be implemented with effect from 1st April 2021. This includes the 'catch up' percentage of 0.25% agreed following the outcome of the National Pay negotiations for 2020/2021.
2. That the bottom of the PG scales be increased to £9.50 per hour wef 1.4.21, subject to '3' below.
3. That the Authority continues its practice of matching the bottom point of PG Scales to the lowest point on the National pay scales if these

exceed the Borough Council's lowest pay point when the National Pay Award is agreed.

4. That staff be granted an additional day of annual leave for 2021/2021 (pro rata for Part Time employees) in recognition of the commitment and flexibility demonstrated by employees throughout the year in continuing to balance the additional demands of the pandemic with a return to delivery of the normal range of Council services. For staff who are scheduled to work on 24.12.21 the additional day should be taken then. For other staff and alternative day off will be agreed with Line Managers.

7 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Tina Underwood thanked the Leader and Deputy Leader for the regular meetings held with the Unions and hoped that the good working relationship would continue.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed when necessary.

The meeting closed at 2.03 pm