

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: NATIONAL PAY AWARD FOR SJC EMPLOYEES
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 19 November 2013
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report explains the current position in respect of the national pay negotiations for Scottish Joint Council (SJC) employees and seeks agreement on a pay award for this group.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that national collective bargaining mechanisms exist for pay negotiations for the above employee group. In this respect, discussions and negotiations have been on-going for some months with the aim of reaching agreement on a pay award for the period effective from 1st April 2013.
- 2.2 The Employer's side have been in discussions with Trade Unions on a pay award for many months. More recently, the Employers' side made an offer to the Trade Unions for a two year deal, on the basis of 1% pay increase for 2013/14 and 2014/15, effective from 1st April each year.
- 2.3 In addition, the proposal was for the pay uplift to be accompanied by the introduction of the Scottish Local Government Living Wage set at £7.50 per hour for 2013/14 and at £7.58 per hour for 2014/15. This approach focuses on maintaining the link between the Scottish Local Government Living Wage and the Living Wage Foundation. If the Living Wage Foundation decide on an hourly rate above the 2014-15 rate of £7.58 in November 2013, then the intention is that Scottish Local Government will match this figure (for application from 1 April 2014) in order to maintain the commitment councils wish to make to their employees at the lower end of the payscale.
- 2.4 It was made clear to the Trade Unions by the Employers' side that the offer was set at the extremity of what Councils could agree. Indeed, they were advised that for some Councils, this was beyond the realms of affordability but was being offered with a means to secure an agreement.
- 2.5 Following a year of negotiations, unions remain divided over the proposed pay award: whilst GMB and Unite have agreed the offer, Unison have rejected the 2 year offer. Subsequently, at a full COSLA convention meeting held on 25th October 2013, the decision was taken to implement the proposed pay deal. Whilst a circular has been received from the Employers' secretary, it should be noted that the circular has not been agreed with the Joint Trade Union Side.

- 2.6 This proposed pay award will see a 1% increase for SJC employees in 2013/14, backdated to April 2013 and a further 1% increase in April 2014, along with the implementation of the Scottish Local Government Living Wage outlined in paragraph 2.3 above.
- 2.7 Subject to approval, the 2013/14 part of the pay award will be processed and included in employee's December 2013 salaries.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 In considering the above, Council has a number of options available:

Implement the national proposed award as outlined in 2.5 above

- 3.2 Implementation of an award of 1% along with the living wage. It is worth noting that all Authorities plan to implement the SJC Employers' circular, even although no agreement has as yet been reached with Trade Unions. As noted in 2.7 above, if the Executive were to agree implementation, the earliest that this could practically be implemented for SJC employees would now be December 2013. Sufficient budget provision has been made for this pay award.

Implement a different pay award/no pay award

- 3.3 Given no national agreement exists, Falkirk Council is not bound to implement the proposed pay award. As an alternative, Elected Members could impose a different level of award or choose to withhold payment, either in the short term or indefinitely. In taking any decision, Elected Members should be mindful of the current budgeted position and the impact on industrial and employee relations.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 **Members are asked to note the above and agree the pay award and living wage which should be implemented for SJC employees covering the period 2013/14 to 2014/15.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Date: October 2013

Ref: KA/TG

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cosla Salaries Circular: Industrial Relations 01/13