



COMMITTEE TITLE: ORDINARY COUNCIL

DATE: 13 December 2023

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| REPORT TITLE: | Employee Pay Award 2023/24 |
| REPORT OF: | Jonathan Stephenson – Chief Executive of Brentwood Borough Council & Rochford District Council |

REPORT SUMMARY

The following report sets out the local pay offer for 2023/24 for employees of Brentwood Borough Council.

SUPPORT ING INFORMATION

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brentwood Borough Council is not part of the NJC and pay is set locally, however over a number of years we have reached agreement on the local pay award, that has mirrored that of the national pay award. On 1 March 2023 the Council agreed to include a 4% pay award within the 2023/24 Budget for Brentwood employees, with a view to wait for the outcome of the nationally agreed pay award, before looking to consult and implement.

National Pay Negotiations 2023/24

There are three separate pay negotiations being undertaken this year for the first time, Chief Executives (ALACE), Chief Officer (JNC) and Officers (NJC).

National Joint Council (NJC)

The National Joint Council (NJC) determines pay as well as terms and conditions of employment for Local government services' workers. It has 70 members: 12 on the employers' side and 58 on the trade union side.

In 1997, the NJC for Local Government Services agreed a national framework with potential for local modification to suit local service requirements. Known as The Single Status Agreement, these pay and conditions of service agreements are published in the Green Book.

They help councils develop a framework for their roles and responsibilities as employers. This covers the relationships between council employers and their employees, including individual rights and collective arrangements.

Negotiations for the National Local Government pay 2023 have been ongoing between the national employees and the trade unions throughout the year, and a full and final offer was agreed by the Unions on the 1 November 2023, as set out below:

- with effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points up to scp 43
- with effect from 1 April 2023, all locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine (scp 43) but graded below chief officer, should be increased by 3.88%

Chief Officers (ALACE & JNC)

A Chief Officer is an employee of the Leadership Team which comprises of the Chief Executive, 3 Strategic Directors and 9 Directors. These Chief Officers work across the Strategic Partnership with this Council and Rochford District Council.

The salaries and any other applicable payments are shared equally with Rochford District Council.

The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives and Chief Officers of Local Authorities is the national negotiating body for the pay and conditions of service of chief executives and chief officers in England and Wales. The Authorities' Side consists of elected members nominated by the Local Government Association and the Welsh Local Government Association. The Staff Side consists of chief executives nominated by the Association of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (ALACE). ALACE is registered as an independent trade union.

On the 5 May 2023, agreement was reached on a pay award for those officers within scope of the JNC for Chief Officers of local authorities. The agreement was an increase of 3.50 per cent with effect from 1 April 2023. This was applied, as set out in the contracts of employment for Chief Officers, as part of the partnership arrangements.

On the 1 November 2023, agreement was reached in terms of the pay award to be applied to Chief Executives. The agreement was an increase of 3.50 per cent with effect from 1 April 2023. This was applied, as set out in the contracts of employment for Chief Officers, as part of the partnership arrangements.

Brentwood Pay Offer 2023/24

Considering the nationally agreed pay award and the 4% agreed at Council on the 1 March 2023, to cover the cost of living pay award. Jonathan Stephenson, Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Opposition Group Leader, used delegated powers to seek agreement to offer the below local pay award as there would be no additional impact on our budget, which was confirmed by Tim Willis, Director of Resources.

Pay Award 2023/24:

- With effect from 1 April 2023 an increase of £1925 on all Brentwood pay points up to scp 46
- with effect from 1 April 2023, pay points above scp 47 but graded below chief officer, should be increased by 3.88%

This offer was then proposed to Unison, the Council's recognised Union, to which they consulted with their members until the 24 November 2023. On the 27 November 2023, Unison advised us that members had accepted the above offer and this will now be applied in December's pay, with back dated monies being paid as appropriate from the 1 April 2023.

Pay Policy

The Localism Act 2011 requires councils to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement. According to the Act and statutory guidance published in 2012 and 2013, the statement should include the local authority's policy on specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency arrangements.

Brentwood's Pay Policy was last updated in March 2023 and will be updated to reflect the revised pay scales for 2023/24.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

By following the national pay offer, it is expected this will create parity and equality for employees, not only for the strategic partnership between Brentwood and Rochford but across all other Essex Authorities as well.

National Living Wage (NLW) is currently £10.42 (age 23 and over), this will increase to £11.44 from the 1 April 2024 and so the proposal to apply £1,925 up to scp 46, is to create some headroom to meet current NLW requirements on our lowest pay scales.

| Grade/ SCP | Annual Salary | Monthly Salary | Hourly Rate | NLW 2023 | With increase of proposed £1,925 | NLW 2024 (age 23 and over) |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|--|----------------------------------|
| A/11 | 19,969 | 1,664 | 10.35 | 10.42 | 11.35 | 11.44 |
| B/12 | 20,330 | 1,694 | 10.53 | 10.42 | 11.53 | 11.44 |

The table shows that an increase of £1,925 will give further headroom to meet NLW requirements for 2023, however consideration for employees on Grade A

will need to be reviewed, and NLW will need to be applied from the 1 April 2024 for employees on this Grade.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Relevant risks in not applying the national pay award locally:

- National Living Wage inconsistencies.
- Staff retention and recruitment.
- Pay awards in comparable sectors e.g. NHS.
- Staff morale.
- Cost of living and inflationary increases for employees.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Staff have been advised of the National Pay Award 2023/24 and that a local offer had been put to Unison. Unison was asked to consult with its members and return a position on the offer at their earliest opportunity and as soon as the consultation concluded on the 24 November 2023. Of which they did and confirmed that members had accepted the offer on the 27 November 2023.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

On 1 March 2023 the Council agreed to include a 4% pay award within the 2023/24 Budget and therefore the cost of living pay award to be implemented can be met within resources.

Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer
Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

6.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Acting Joint Director – People & Governance & Monitoring Officer
Tel & Email 01277 312500 / Claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

7.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Ensuring the Council maintains a healthy pay scale position, will continue to create growth and prosperity across the organisation.

Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director - Place
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8.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not include tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that ‘marriage and civil partnership’ is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health

Tel & Email 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Name & Title: Henry Muss, Sustainability & Climate Officer

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Ordinary Council | 2 November 2022 |