

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 4TH APRIL 2017

ITEM 9 STANDBY AND CALL-OUT, STANDBY AND ADVISORY AND EMERGENCY CONTACT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Statement from Trade Unions

The unions are keen to see this matter resolved, but it must be a satisfactory agreement for the Council and for staff. At the JNCC meeting in January 2017 it was agreed that there would be a final meeting of management and the unions in order to attempt to come to an agreement.

The meeting was foreshortened by the question of Equal Pay and both sides felt unable to discuss the other issues until that had been resolved.

There are three basic issues:

1. Potential for a breach of Equal Pay legislation
2. Parity across all staff providing standby
3. Backdating

1. Equal Pay – The minutes from the January 2017 JNCC meeting quote Gayle Baker (Charnwood HR Manager) as follows:

- *the issues in question had been under consideration for a considerable time, and had originally been raised by the Management side due to potential risks of an equal pay claim following the bringing back in-house of repairs and maintenance staff who were receiving much higher payments than other council staff, which meant that standby and call-out arrangements needed to be reviewed.*

Following consultation with UNISON members in February, the UNISON Regional Organiser was compelled to seek legal advice on whether the proposed policy breaches Equal Pay legislation. As at 28th March 2017 I am still awaiting the outcome.

It's important for the Council to have certainty on this point before implementing a new policy.

2. Parity - The draft policy states:

8.11 *While payment for Standby and Call-out and Standby and Advisory Schemes are paid in a different way, the basis for the amount paid is comparable. Payment for Standby and Call-out amounts to £250 per week and for Standby and Advisory Scheme, a combination of £62 per week for being on Standby plus pay at an appropriate rate for time spent, when providing advice, will be paid.*



UNISON members were clear at the consultation in February 2017 that the proposed policy is a mechanism for maintaining a two tier system. The basis for the amount paid is not "comparable"; it is not even comparable within Housing Repairs Service where staff receive £250 per week whether they are called out 8 times a week, 3 times a week or not at all. The reality is that some Housing Repairs crafts are regularly called out more than other crafts.

At the consultation in February, UNISON members being offered £62 per week simply wanted equality and a truly comparable payment. £250 per week is below private sector rates. £62 per week plus callout payments falls well short of private sector rates and many public sector examples supplied to management.

The unions are committed to balloting members on the final offer, and are awaiting a current list of affected staff from the Council.

3. Backdating

UNISON members raised the issue of parity in September 2014. The £250 per week rate and the keyholder payments rate have not previously been index linked for many years and therefore the value has been eroded by years of inflation.

So far management have refused to back date a final offer. The unions accept that there have been delays on both sides. The unions request backdating but would be flexible about the date that this would be calculated from.

So, as much as all parties would like to resolve this matter, it needs to be agreed and not to be rushed through.

Therefore I am requesting that Personnel Committee refers the matter back to management and the unions to resolve these important outstanding issues.

Colin Bailey
Branch Secretary
Charnwood UNISON