

## Rother District Council

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	21 September 2022
Report of the	-	Licensing and General Purposes Committee
Subject	-	Reference from the Licensing and General Purposes Committee – Review of Local Pay Award

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The Council is asked to consider the recommendations arising from the Licensing and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 31 August 2022 as set out below.

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### LICENSING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 31 AUGUST 2022

#### LG22/08. REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY AWARD

Consideration was given to the report of the Human Resources Manager on the staff pay award for 2022/23. In April 2022, the Licensing and General Purposes Committee (L&GP) met to consider the pay award for 2022/23; at that time, the national pay award was unknown. Concerns had been raised regarding the difficulties the Council was experiencing recruiting professional staff, which was also a national issue. A pay proposal of 2.5% or £500, whichever was greater, to be applied to the current pay scales with the rate decreasing as it was applied to the upper pay scales, was agreed and sent to Staff Side/UNISON for consideration. The total cost to the Council would be £113,000 per annum, which was affordable. Staff Side/UNISON's response was detailed at Appendix A to the report.

Staff Side/UNISON had requested consideration of either £2,000 or an increase in line with the current rate of RPI, whichever was the higher for employees (aligned with UNISON NJC Pay Claim 2022/23). This proposal would cost £930,000 which was £820,000 higher than the funding envelope and would put significant pressure on the Council's budget which could result in redundancies.

Members were advised that the National pay offer being made to unions was currently an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay scales and included a proposal of 4.04% increase on all allowances, as well as an increase of one days' annual leave entitlement from April 2023. The cost of this would be approximately £465,000 which was £355,000 higher than the funding envelope.

Consideration was also given to a one-off amount of £500 plus a 1% increase on all pay scales. This option was more affordable, would not overlap pay scales, reduce the risk of losing valuable staff and put the Council in a more secure position regarding recruitment opportunities. It would ensure equal and fair pay across the authority and protect a large increase in the base budget. The cost would be £196,000 which was £85,000 higher than the funding envelope.

During the discussions, the following points were noted:

- no commitment had been received from central Government that any funding would be granted to meet a pay award. Any award made over the allocated budget could well result in cuts to jobs and services in order to approve a balanced budget that was not reliant on taking cash from the Council's Reserves;
- Members suggested that the Chief Executive write to central Government to request funding be provided to all Local Authorities (LA) to enable pay awards to be met;
- most LA's pay awards were from 1 April, so if Members opted to backdate to 1 April, the Council would be brought in line. The base budget would not be affected as all costings in the report were shown as a full year cost;
- Members suggested giving consideration to adding a working from home allowance to the more affordable option of paying all staff a one-off amount of £500 plus a 1% increase on their pay scale point;
- the Council was also subject to huge inflationary pressures (utility bills and other contracts) and staff may look to working more from the office over the winter months due to increases in their own utility bills;
- consideration of funding and discussions with unions for a pay award for the following year should commence early;
- an award in line with the National pay offer would result in the Council being aligned with other LAs; and
- Members were hopeful that further packages to aid residents with the rising cost of living would become available from central Government further down the line.

After consideration, the L&GP agreed that an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay scales and a 4.04% increase on all allowances, as well as an increase of one days' annual leave entitlement from April 2023 be recommended to full Council and backdated to 1 April 2022. The L&GP also recommended that the Chief Executive write to central Government to request funding be provided to all Local Authorities (LA) to enable pay awards to be met.

**RECOMMENDED:** That:

- 1) an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay scales and a 4.04% increase on all allowances, as well as an increase of one days' annual leave entitlement from April 2023 be approved and backdated to 1 April 2022; and
- 2) the Chief Executive write to central Government to request funding be provided to all Local Authorities (LA) to enable pay awards to be met.

(Licensing and General Purposes Committee Agenda Item 5)

Councillor A.S. Mier  
Chair, Licesning and General Purposes Committee