



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)	Council	18 April 2024

Review of Pay and Conditions

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To approve changes to the pay, terms and conditions of staff following a review which included legally required negotiations with the union.

2. Corporate priorities

- 2.1** A well run, forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** The proposal being recommended is to escalate staff on Grades 4 to 13 in the following bands:
- Grades 4 to 6 will receive one additional increment – average 1.84% increase (141 staff, 124.58 FTE)
 - Grades 7 to 13 will receive two additional increments – average 5.12% increase (133 staff, 126.58 FTE).
- 3.2** It is proposed that the annualised flexi allowance be amended from 26 days to 16 days per year (pro-rata to part-time staff) on a phased basis over the next two years as follows:
2024/25 – 20 days
2025/26 – 16 days.
- 3.3** The above proposals be implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.

4. Background

- 4.1** At the Cabinet meeting on 29 November 2023, approval was granted to undertake a review of pay and conditions, primarily to support improving the recruitment and retention of technical and professional staff at the

council. Permission was granted to enter into legally required negotiations with the union based upon the proposal detailed in section 5 of that report ([Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 29th November, 2023, 6.00 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)).

- 4.2** Wyre has a collective bargaining agreement in place with unison and as such are bound to negotiate with them on matters effecting terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.3** Representatives from the Human Resources team met with local and regional representatives from Unison on 21 December 2023. The initial proposals to the union were to increase the pay line as set out in 3.1 above; reduce mileage rates from 52.2p per mile to HMRC rates of 45.5p per mile; and cap the number of days' flexi that can be taken per annum to 16 days (from 26 days).
- 4.4** Unison conducted a five-day ballot ending at noon on 12 January 2024 the result of which was to reject the proposals – 68 voting against and 12 for. Further discussions with the branch members continued through January and February and briefing sessions were held with staff (not restricted to union members) to gauge wider feedback on the proposals.
- 4.5** Feedback from Unison set out that members would not wish to accept the proposals as a package. Whilst staff at Grade 4 and over were keen for an increase in pay, the reductions to mileage rates and annual flexi leave allowance were seen as detrimental and therefore not something that they would want to agree to.
- 4.6** No counter proposals were provided by the Unison branch. However in consideration of the feedback received we amended our proposals to include a phased approach to reducing the flexi allowance and to limit the reduction to 46.9p per mile rather than 45.5p per mile in the initial proposal. The updated mileage proposals together with the offer as set out in sections 3.1 – 3.3 above were communicated to the Unison branch as a final offer.
- 4.7** Unison conducted a further ballot w/c 19 February, this time with 52 rejecting and 30 voting to accept.
- 4.8** Further discussions with the union took place and in recognition of the depth of feeling around mileage and with a view that the proposals should be a very positive message for the majority of staff, an amended proposal was offered to the union taking out any decrease in mileage allowance.
- 4.9** On 27 March we received confirmation from the branch that they have accepted the proposals.
- 4.10** Following agreement on the 2023/24 national pay award and minor changes to the active spinal points, the estimated cost of the additional

increments has been revised upwards from £380,000 to £400,000 in 2024/25.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** The proposal being recommended is to escalate staff on Grades 4 to 13 in the following bands:
- Grades 1 to 3 will not change (50 staff, 40.88 FTE)
 - Grades 4 to 6 will receive one additional increment – average 1.84% increase (141 staff, 124.58 FTE)
 - Grades 7 to 13 will receive two additional increments – average 5.12% increase (133 staff, 126.58 FTE)
- 5.2** This increase will cost an estimated £400,000 (including NI and pension) in 2024/25, based on the current establishment list, which is in line with the savings figure identified on pension contributions.
- 5.3** Not changing rates of pay for Grades 1 to 3 reflects the significant weighting at the bottom end of the pay scale from recent pay awards which have had to keep pace with the rises in National Living Wage at the expense of maintaining the differential between these less skilled roles and their supervisors. This approach will help to redress the balance and, in some circumstances, improve the incentive for those in the lower paid roles to seek advancement.
- 5.4** Benchmarking indicates that Wyre is in the minority with the current number of flexi leave days that can be taken over a twelve month period (26). The cap at 16 days brings us in line with other local councils whilst still providing the flexibility for staff to use flexi time accrued throughout the year. The phased approach proposed will assist staff and managers with this transition.
- 5.5** The proposal to reduce mileage allowance was resisted by the union and feedback from staff not in the union was similarly opposed to the change. Whilst the savings that would be realised by the reduction would have gone towards the proposed increases in salary as set out in 5.1, they would have been minimal and the benefit of this was balanced with the importance of staff morale. To ensure the positivity of the proposals was retained, the decision was made to take out the mileage.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** Numerous scenarios have been profiled and rejected on the grounds of cost and failure to achieve the desired outcomes of maximum benefit to staff at the skilled, technical and professional levels whilst creating headroom between supervisory levels and general staff.
- 6.2** As detailed in the report above, the original mileage rate proposal has been modified following the feedback received from staff and Unison.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	In 2023/24, a new triennial actuarial review period commenced for our local government pension scheme contributions. The council's future service contribution rate fell from an estimated 18.3% to an estimated 13.5% for the three financial years from 2023/24 to 2025/26. The majority of this saving was retained in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) pending a review of the pay line and will therefore be utilised to cover the cost of the changes at 5.1.
Legal	Negotiations with the union will be subject to approval at Full Council and take place within agreed parameters as per the Cabinet report 29 November 2023. The outcome of these discussions is relayed as part of this report.
Climate Change	The proposals made do not have a direct impact on the council's carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None