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Renfrewshire Council

Mark Ferguson, Unison Branch Secretary

Consultation on Proposed Revision to Terms and Conditions for Local Government Employees

I refer to our recent consultation and negotiating meeting on 28 April 2011 and ongoing correspondence regarding proposed revisions to the terms and conditions of employment for Local Government Employees.

As agreed at the meeting and considering further the position of the Trade Unions, I now enclose the Councils amended proposals for this revised package of terms and conditions of employment for Local Government Employees.

I would re-iterate that the Council is taking these measures to protect jobs, ensure future service delivery is sustainable and to address the Council's budget deficit. It is important that agreement on this package can be reached by the Council and Trade Unions in order to minimise further reductions in the Council's workforce. I would therefore welcome any final alternative views, recommendations, or proposals you may have to alter this package which can assist the Council to make the necessary savings required.

As advised, I require to report the outcome of our negotiations to a meeting of the Council in June, and therefore I would be grateful if you could provide me with your final position on these proposals. On receipt of advice and guidance from your National Regional Office, I would be grateful if you would confirm as soon as possible your intention to ballot your members on the package and what the timescales for this would be.

I would appreciate receiving your formal response by 13 May 2011.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Head of HR and Organisational Development

Enc Terms and Condition Proposals

TERMS AND CONDITIONS PROPOSALS

1 Introduction

1.1 To help address the Councils large funding gap, extensive discussions and negotiations have been ongoing with the Trade Unions with a view to agreeing changes to terms and conditions of employment for local government employees.

1.2 In summary, discussions and negotiations between the Council and the Trade Unions have focussed on the following areas:

- Public holidays;
- Removal/reduction in night duty allowances;
- Reduction in overtime enhancements;
- Freezing of incremental progression;
- Redeployment;
- Death in service;
- Payroll rationalisation and;
- Living wage.

1.3 The Council remains committed to avoiding compulsory redundancies and the proposals outlined below are necessary as the Council tackles its funding gap and protects its core workforce and essential services.

1.4 The Council is keen to agree with the Trade Unions the undernoted package as soon as possible, allowing the Trade Unions to ballot their membership on the proposals.

2 Public holidays

2.1 At the moment there are 12 fixed public holidays. It is proposed to convert 6 of these days into 'floating' days. Following recent discussions it is proposed that implementation would be phased in over a 2 year period moving to 9 fixed public holidays in 2012 and 6 fixed in 2013.

2.2 The 6 fixed public holidays would be:

- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- New Years Day
- 2nd January
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday

2.3 The 6 remaining 'floating days' will then be added to an employees annual leave entitlement providing greater flexibility to take time off throughout the leave year. In addition, services will be opened for normal business on these days, allowing greater levels of services for customers/clients.

3 Night duty allowance

3.1 Providing key proposals within the package can be agreed and following representation from the Trade Unions, it is proposed to leave the current arrangements for night duty allowance unchanged.

4 Overtime

4.1 Following discussions and if an appropriate package can be agreed, it is proposed to retain the current threshold of 37 hours before enhanced rates are paid (no change).

4.2 It is proposed that there is a review of the overtime ceiling rate from Spinal Column Point 75 (top of grade GRJ) to SCP 43 (top of grade GRF). This would affect employees working overtime who are grade GRG or above and would mean these employees would be paid an overtime rate not exceeding grade GRG.

4.3 The Council and Trade Unions will work jointly to reduce overtime levels across the Council through the introduction of new working patterns within the existing agreed core hours (Monday to Sunday 7am to 10pm).

4.4 Providing key proposals within the package can be agreed and (4.3) above is fully committed to, it would be proposed to review the effectiveness of (4.3) over the coming year which may require further discussion regarding the original proposals set out at (a) and (b) below.

(a) It is proposed to adjust enhanced rates from T1/2 to T1/3 for hours worked beyond 37 per week (alternatively time off in lieu could be granted subject to the exigencies of the service).

(b) Where overtime is worked on a fixed public holiday, plain time and half time off in lieu, or time and a half in complete recompense would be applied.

5 Incremental progression

5.1 It is proposed that there will be no incremental progression in 2012 for employees graded GRG and above. Further discussion will take place on whether any further incremental freeze is required in 2013. This proposal is in line with the Trade Unions request to minimise the impact on lower paid employees.

6 Reduction in incremental points

6.1 It is proposed to reduce the number of incremental points in between salary scales GRB and GRF. The bottom point of these salary scales will be deleted from 1 April 2012. Employees on the current bottom point of these scales will be automatically progressed to the revised first point from 1 April 2012.

7 Redeployment

7.1 Redeployment is the procedure to handle employees' who are 'displaced' or who due to service restructure/redesign are placed into a post at a lower grade.

7.2 Where employees become 'displaced' through a service restructure/redesign, redeployment processes will be prepared in line with discussions with the Trade Unions. The redeployment process will aim to secure alternative employment for employees who are 'displaced', enabling valuable experience, skills and knowledge to be retained within the Council.

7.3 Where an employee becomes 'displaced' or through service restructure/ redesign is placed into a post at a lower grade, every effort will be made to continue to seek an alternative post at the employee's original grade. Protection or cash conservation may be required while looking for an alternative post and will be available for a period not exceeding 12 months.

8 Death in service

8.1 Families of employees who are not in the Local Government Pension Scheme will receive a payment of £4000 in the event of death in service.

9 Payroll rationalisation

9.1 It is proposed that the number of payruns are rationalised leaving fortnightly and four weekly payruns only. Arrangements will be put in place to assist employees with this change.

10 Living wage

10.1 The Council is committed to introducing the living wage of £7.15 per hour when it is affordable to do so and will engage with the Trade Unions on an appropriate package and timescale for implementation.