

Employment Committee 7th November 2024

Report Title	Pay Award 2024/25
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Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)	Modern public services

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek agreement to apply the 2024-25 national local government pay award (NJC for LGS) to North Northamptonshire Council staff on TUPE protected local terms and conditions.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has a range of pay and terms and conditions for its employees as a result of local government reorganisation. Staff who transferred to North Northamptonshire Council on 1st April 2021 transferred on the terms and conditions of their predecessor authorities.
- 2.2 Employees who transferred on nationally agreed pay and terms and conditions, those who were assimilated onto North Northamptonshire Council pay, terms and conditions of employment from 1 February 2024 and those who choose to voluntarily assimilate onto the council pay terms and conditions under Phase 2 of the Pay and Grading project have a contractual entitlement to receive a pay uplift following national pay agreements. However, those remaining on local terms and conditions will not automatically receive a pay award.
- 2.3 The 2024-25 pay award for local government services (NJC for LGS) has now been agreed nationally. Pending agreement from the Employment Committee

to apply the national pay award to staff on local terms, the preference would be to pay this before Christmas, ideally in the November pay-run but no later than the December pay-run. In order to achieve this, the increase would need to be applied to the payroll system immediately. The Committee is therefore asked to approve the payment of this award to employees on local terms and conditions.

- 2.4 In October 2022 and November 2023, the Employment Committee agreed to apply the relevant national pay award to employees on local terms and conditions. This was well received by employees. In order to continue striving to be an employer of choice, remain competitive and ensure fairness across the organisation, it is proposed that all employees receive the 2024-25 pay award as outlined in the recommendations.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Employment Committee:

3.1.1. Approves the application of the 2024-25 National Pay Agreements which will uplift the salaries for North Northamptonshire Council employees on local terms and conditions by the same value as the respective national pay award noted in 4.3 of the report.

- 3.2. Reasons for the recommendations:

3.2.1. Following local government reorganisation, employees were transferred under TUPE from predecessor authorities to North Northamptonshire Council on the pay, terms and conditions applicable to them on 31st March 2021. Whilst the majority of our workforce (employees who TUPE transferred from the District and Borough council's and those now on the North Northamptonshire Council pay terms and conditions) are on nationally agreed pay, terms and conditions, and therefore contractually entitled to nationally agreed pay awards, 21% of full-time equivalent employees are on 'local' TUPE pay, terms and conditions and do not therefore automatically receive a pay award.

3.2.2. The pay award supports the Council's aim to attract and retain staff, recognising their ongoing hard work and contribution in the delivery of council services. The decision also supports the Council's corporate aim to be an employer of choice and embraces the One Council values.

3.2.3. As a result of the decision to offer TUPE employees the opportunity to voluntarily assimilate to the council pay terms and conditions, it is anticipated that around 75% - 80% of TUPE employees will choose to assimilate during 2025. This will significantly reduce the number of employees on TUPE terms, including those subject to 'local' pay decisions.

3.3. Alternative options considered

- 3.3.1. The Employment Committee could decide to only pay employees who are contractually entitled to the pay uplift, however the impact on morale across the organisation and the Council's ability to recruit and retain talent, would likely be hampered by this decision. This decision would not be aligned to the Corporate Plan, which was agreed by full Council.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. When North Northamptonshire Council came into being on 1st April 2021, all predecessor authorities were signed up to national pay, terms and conditions, with the exception of Northamptonshire County Council, which had decided that pay and terms and conditions would be determined locally.
- 4.2. Where local authorities recognise national agreements, pay is determined by a negotiating body; the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services. The NJC is made up of representatives from trade unions and the employers. Historically, the NJC will seek to agree a pay award to increase local government pay each year. Negotiations for the April 2024 pay award have been ongoing and an agreement by two of the three trade unions (Unison and GMB) was reached on 23 October 2024. Up to 2020, every NJC pay deal was reached with the agreement of all three unions. But since 2021 pay deals have been reached with just UNISON and GMB. For a fourth consecutive year, Unite has refused to have its details included in the 2024 NJC pay agreement circular.
- 4.3. **The agreed pay award for 2024/25 for NJC for Local Government Services ('Green Book') includes:**
 - 4.3.1. an increase of £1,290 on all NJC pay spine pay points (NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive). This represents a percentage increase of between 5.76% (NJC pay point 2) and 2.5% (NJC pay point 43);
 - 4.3.2. an increase of 2.5% on pay points that extend the NJC pay spine above the maximum, but graded below deputy chief officer;
 - 4.3.3. an increase of 2.5% on NJC allowances – this impacts 'sleeping in' payments for our workforce.
- 4.4. Within local government, there is no single set of nationally agreed pay terms and conditions, but several, dependent on job role. The majority of North Northamptonshire Council employees are "Green Book" employees. The other national terms and conditions North Northamptonshire Council recognise are:
 - 4.4.1. The Soulbury Committee ("Blue Book") for posts such as Educational Psychologists and School Improvement professionals.
 - 4.4.2. The Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives for the Chief Executive.

- 4.4.3. The Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities for all other Chief Officers.
 - 4.4.4. The Secretary of State via the National School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Burgundy Book) for the teachers employed by the Authority.
- 4.5. Apprenticeship rates are also updated each April in accordance with National Apprenticeship Guidance.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Upon transition to North Northamptonshire Council, employees were transferred under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 "TUPE" to North Northamptonshire Council on the pay, terms and conditions that they were subject to at their previous authorities. North Northamptonshire Council employees are therefore working on different pay, terms and conditions, depending on which authority they transferred from. Employees who transferred from the District and Borough councils have a contractual entitlement to receive the nationally agreed pay awards.
- 5.2. In addition, prior to unitary, North Northamptonshire Council agreed to apply national agreements on pay reached through the national joint negotiating machinery for any employees appointed after 1 April 2021, which provides greater stability to its workforce and is also attractive to potential talent wanting to join the organisation. The Council considers this to be a key element of its recruitment and retention strategy.
- 5.3. The Council has committed to being an employer of choice and recognises the importance of ensuring fairness across the organisation. It is therefore proposed that those employees who are subject to local terms and conditions receive the same pay award as their colleagues who benefit from national pay agreements. This will ensure that the Council does not have a two-tier workforce and that all employees are treated in an equal way.
- 5.4. Whilst the alternative option is to only pay employees who are contractually entitled to the pay uplift, the impact on the organisation and the Council's ability to recruit and retain talent would be greatly hampered by this decision. Such a decision would not accord with the Council Corporate Plan, which was agreed by Full Council.
- 5.5. Budget has been built into the 2024/25 MTFP in anticipation of the position being agreed nationally.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. If the Employment Committee approve the payment of the national NJC pay award to employees on local terms and conditions, instruction will be issued to payroll to apply the increase to the payroll system immediately, with the intention that this would be paid in the November pay-run alongside employees who are contractually entitled to the uplift; but if that is not possible, to pay no later than the December pay-run.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. The overall cost to implement the pay award for employees across all funds is £5 million. This will be funded through existing budgets and use of contingency.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. Full Council has delegated authority to the Employment Committee via the Constitution to agree to implement any pay awards for those employees on local terms and conditions.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The Council is committed, within its Corporate Plan 2021-2025 to invest in and value its staff to become an employer of choice.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.
- 7.4.2. In respect of the decision to apply the 2024 pay award, it should be noted that there are tight timescales to ensure that payment can be made before Christmas 2024.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. The Council continues to hold regular meetings with recognised Trade Unions.

7.6. Equality Implications

- 7.6.1. By ensuring those employees who are subject to local terms and conditions receive the same pay award as their colleagues who benefit from national pay agreements, this will ensure that the Council does not have a two-tier workforce and that all employees are treated in an equal way.

7.7. Climate Impact

- 7.7.1. Not applicable

7.8. Community Impact

7.8.1. Not applicable

7.9. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.9.1. Not applicable

8. Background Papers

8.1.1. [North Northamptonshire Council - Corporate Plan 2021-2025](#)