

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	10 June 2015
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development.
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Roger Reed
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Support Services Staff Pay Award
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Staff are employed under contracts with either the terms and conditions of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service, 2004 "the Grey Book" incorporated; or with the provisions of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Scheme of Conditions of Service for Support Services staff.</p> <p>The Authority currently employs 100 Support Services staff in a variety of roles.</p> <p>Unlike "Grey Book" staff, there is no formal negotiating mechanism for reviewing Support Services staff pay on an annual basis.</p> <p>A paper was submitted to the Strategic Management Board (SMB) which proposed a 1 per cent pay award from July 2014 for Support Services staff.</p> <p>The pay award was recommended and agreed upon based on the high performance and productivity of support staff and affordability within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>Support Services staff undertake a critically important role in the Authority. In recent years we have employed specialist support staff and managers to improve the professionalism of the service in different directorates, ultimately supporting the frontline operational service.</p> <p>The support functions have been the subject of regular reviews and restructuring to a degree not yet faced by many response functions. These reviews have resulted in significant organisational savings, which have been</p>

	<p>instrumental in achieving the MTFP reductions, by cutting headcount, making redundancies and introducing different ways of working. Consequently we demand more flexibility from those support staff that have remained employed. We are expecting our support staff to do more with less, and we have not so far seen productivity to be detrimentally affected by the staffing reductions and change.</p> <p>Support Services staff have frequently worked beyond their normal roles particularly supporting projects and in times of industrial action and this extra commitment has been invaluable during those critical times.</p> <p>Several Support Services staff have undertaken personal professional development and many now work collaboratively with other fire and rescue services, across different locations.</p> <p>Overall performance of our support services staff at all levels has been outstanding, demonstrated by organisational achievements, good attendance levels and high appraisal ratings. They have shown a positive approach to all the changes and demands placed upon them during the last two years.</p> <p>The pay award was agreed by SMB and paid to staff in the May 2015 payroll run, with arrears.</p> <p>The SMB report and supporting papers have been placed in the Members library for information.</p>
ACTION	For information.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the decision to make a 1 per cent pay award to support services staff, back dated to July 2014, be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>Support Services staff have a valuable role in the fire service at all levels, from administrative to professional specialist responsibilities. The risk of not rewarding these staff fairly is they become to feel undervalued, particularly when compared to operational colleagues, and this may reflect in staff turnover and performance.</p> <p>Any review of pay, grading and reward presents a financial risk, i.e. potential increase to pay bill. This is mitigated by sound budgeting.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>As part of the MTFP process we budget for a support services staff annual pay award.</p> <p>In line with this, a 1 per cent increase was budgeted</p>

	<p>for support services staff pay in 2014/15. It was held within the contingency budget as no decision has been made to apply this amount earlier during the year. The budget was for the award to be applicable from 1 July 2014.</p> <p>The cost of applying 1 per cent from July 2014 is approximately £32,000 (including on costs) based on current staff numbers (this recognises the current vacancies). Total pay budget for 2015 will increase by approximately £40,000 p.a.</p> <p>Looking forward a 1 per cent increase was budgeted for all staff as part of this year's MTFP i.e. to be applied during 2015/16.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>There are no legal implications in relation to this award.</p> <p>The application of the pay award sits within the delegated authority for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive.</p>
<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p>	<p>There are no Health and Safety implications of the pay award.</p>
<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>The gender breakdown for support services staff is split 53 per cent female and 47 per cent male.</p> <p>The application of a fair, transparent pay policy and reward strategy across all staff groups is important in demonstrating our continued commitment to Equality and Diversity.</p> <p>As part of the recent support services staff grading review we completed an Equal Pay Audit which sought to ensure the Authority has fair, transparent, inclusive pay and reward structures and systems, therefore mitigating risks of equal pay claims in the future.</p> <p>The main support services staff pay scales have been adapted accordingly to reflect the one percent award, with trainee and apprenticeship pay scales forming part of the in year review of the Authority's pay policy, scheduled for autumn 2015.</p>
<p>USE OF RESOURCES</p>	<p>Contribution to achievement of Strategic objectives;</p> <p>The application of a fair, transparent and equitable reward structure will enhance individual and therefore organisational performance. It will also positively support any work undertaken on the revised employee proposition, including consideration of best companies' awards.</p>

	<p>Communication with stakeholders and staff;</p> <p>Following approval of any pay increase, changes to the rates will be updated and communicated via the leadership group, personal letter and the <i>I:drive</i>.</p> <p>The system of internal control;</p> <p>Payroll is regularly subject to internal and external Audits therefore ensuring correct application of all salary scales.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy</p> <p>All proposals will be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Background papers:</p> <p>18 February 2015 Fire Authority report: BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2015/16</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/3614/2347/1577/ITEM_1_1_Pay_Policy_Principles_and_Statement_2015_16_-_Cover_report_for_18_02_15_Fire_Authority_knReport.pdf;</p> <p>30 July 2014 Executive Committee report: Review of pay, grading and terms and conditions for staff covered by the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Support Services Staff, Scheme of Conditions of Service</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5614/0603/0334/ITEM_1_0_Report_on_Pay_Grading_Review_inc_Annex_A_and_Appendices.pdf;</p> <p>20 November 2013 Executive Committee report: Review of support staff (local Green Book) terms and conditions of service and pay, grading and reward structure</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/6014/0631/0052/201113_Executive.pdf;</p> <p>18 September 2013 Executive Committee report: Equal Pay Audit Outcomes</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4714/0631/0051/180913_Executive.pdf;</p> <p>16 January 2013 HR Sub Committee report: Equal Pay Audit: Including review of Green Book staff remuneration and conditions of service: Update report</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/3714/0632/6811/HR160113.pdf;</p>

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APPENDICES	None
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes.
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