

Safest People, Safest Places

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

21 DECEMBER 2017

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL PAY NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide members with an update on the National Joint Council (NJC) national pay negotiations.

BACKGROUND

2. Members will be aware from previous updates received that the NJC pay negotiations relate to operational firefighters, including control staff, up to and including the role of Area Manager (AM) with a pay award for these staff due 01 July 2017.
3. The delay in agreeing the pay award has mainly been due to the fact that the pay increase for operational firefighters has been linked to the on-going NJC negotiations on broadening the role of firefighters into areas such as; emergency medical response (EMR) and response to marauding terrorist firearms attack (MTFA).
4. At the September Authority meeting members were updated on the ongoing negotiations; this highlighted that on 01 July 2017, the Employers side of the NJC wrote to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) providing details of a two stage pay offer. The first stage offered an immediate 2.0% increase on basic pay across the board providing that the EMR trial continued. This, they believed, would have allowed time to reach a permanent agreement regarding broadening the role of firefighters, including EMR, and an agreement on a longer term pay award.
5. In addition, if the first stage had been agreed the second stage would provide for a further 3% increase, with effect from 01 April 2018 as part of the 2017 settlement; this second stage would be subject to securing additional government funding.
6. Following consultation with its members, the FBU rejected the offer and ceased the EMR trial; however, they noted that negotiations would continue.

CURRENT POSITION

7. Following the rejection of the offer by the FBU on the 13 September 2017, the employers side of the NJC wrote to the FBU suggesting that both sides agree to uplift pay across the board by 1.0%, (an increase in line with the government's 1% pay cap for the public sector) with this being backdated to 01 July 2017. This would ensure that the sum originally set aside in fire service budgets, at the start of the financial year to cover a pay award, could be passed on without further delay.

8. The FBU sought clarity that the offer did not constitute a full and final offer in respect of settlement for the pay year 2017/18 and that it was not dependent upon any other factor or undertaking; i.e continuation of the EMR trial. The employers side of the NJC confirmed that this did not constitute a full and final offer and the aim was to continue with the negotiations regarding broadening the role of the firefighter.
9. On the 07 December 2017 the FBU confirmed it agreed to the proposal to uplift pay by 1% and the NJC informed fire authorities to apply the 1% uplift to pay; backdated to 01 July 2017.

NEXT STEPS

10. Nationally the negotiations on broadening the role of the firefighter continue and members will be kept informed on progress. The current medium term financial plan (MTFP) includes the 1% pay increase; therefore, there is no financial impact for 2017/18.
11. Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of the report; and
 - b. **receive** further reports on the outcomes of national negotiations on pay.

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