

HARROW COUNCIL

Feedback from initial consultation with Directorate and Schools Support staff on Modernising Terms and Conditions of Employment, an alternative of a 2.5% basic pay reduction and a number of contractual changes

This is a summary of the responses to the initial consultation exercise which took place between 13 April and 14 May 2012. The consultation period continues until the 16th July 2012 during which time staff can continue to feedback their views and comments via their Manager, the Terms and Conditions Hotline 020 8416 8211 or by email to staffbenefits@harrow.gov.uk

Across the Council a total of 1129 questionnaires were returned: 59% from Directorate based staff, 33% from school based employees and 8% of questionnaires where there was no indication where the employee worked. Some questionnaires were returned with only some of the questions answered. All of the responses are reflected in the proportions of respondents who agreed or not with the proposals.

The responses from the consultation questionnaire tick boxes have been analysed in the tables below which show the responses from staff in total and by impact, i.e. it was important to distinguish between the views of those affected by the proposals, such as on the proposal to modify payments for the Essential Car User scheme, and those that were not*.

The comments from the free text area on the questionnaire have been summarised together with feedback from consultation meetings with directorate and school based staff and other groups. Consultation is continuing with the trade unions to try to reach a collective agreement.

*Employees who responded to the questionnaire used their own judgement on whether they were likely to be affected by the proposals. In some cases not all these staff will be affected.

Modernising Proposals

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS, TIME OFF AND PAYMENTS

Improved flexibility in working practices	All Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	77%	66%	80%	69%	40%	61%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Concern that flexible working is not available to all
- School staff cannot benefit by working flexibly
- Need to ensure IT support available and the IT functionality enables the same access at home as at work
- Concerns that arrangements are in place to ensure that employees have sufficient support available from colleagues, managers.
- Employees with caring responsibilities welcome more flexible working

Removal of enhancements for overtime and weekend working	All Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	12%	37%	9%	50%	31%	19%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Some staff claim that removal would cause financial hardship
- Proposals adversely affect staff working atypical hours (eg evenings, weekends) who cannot work flexibly as they are likely to be delivering front line services
- For lower graded staff, proposals likely to have a high impact on pay and on motivation, performance and commitment to work
- Take away enhancements for overtime but not for weekends
- Week end only workers are particularly affected
- Staff working weekends as part of their normal working pattern are generally in lower pay bracket and potentially face some of the most significant cuts
- Concerns that may be unable to obtain staff cover over weekends and bank holidays (permanent, temporary, casual and agency workers)

Increasing Annual Leave by one day	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	68%	68%	66%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Generally not supported in the context of any paycut
- Will result in increased costs for the Council
- Difficult to take current leave not appropriate to give more
- Could adversely affect service delivery

Reducing Sick Pay and Industrial Injury Pay entitlement	All Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	39%	48%	23%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Overall no support for reducing either
- Suggestion that maximum entitlement should be 3 months on full and 3 months on half-pay
- Concern that will affect those with real health problems most
- Not easy to adjust personal financial commitments in shorter time period
- Absence should be managed better
- Consider applying any changes to new staff only

GRADING STRUCTURE AND SALARY PROGRESSION

Modifying current grading structure	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	80%	80%	80%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Inappropriate rise in pay for SPM3 given primary reason for review is to save money

Raising minimum of H1 to ensure Council pays minimum of London Living Wage	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	91%	94%	85%	96%	95%	86%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Concern new staff will be paid the same as those with years of service

Apply 2.5% pay cut to Chief Exec and Corp Directors*	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	90%	89%	93%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- General view there should be a higher pay cut
- Some lower graded staff will face reductions in excess of 2.5% eg as a result of loss of enhanced overtime and weekend payments, it does not seem fair that senior managers are only taking a 2.5% pay cut

Directors and Heads of Service to forego up to 2.5% pay award from 1st April 2012*	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	87%	87%	88%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Seems unfair that senior managers have a pay freeze whilst other staff on lower grades have pay cuts as a result of loss of enhanced overtime and weekend payments

*it has not been possible to analyse responses from the few staff affected as a much higher number of staff claim to be affected than is correct. However, it has been noted that not all staff at this level support these proposals.

Apply incremental progression to only those who satisfactorily perform	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	78%	59%	79%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Any change should be implemented for all staff including managers
- Concern proposal could be discriminatory
- Need to ensure that policies resulting in warnings are applied consistently

MOBILITY

Retain Essential User Car Scheme but modify the lump sum and apply HMRC mileage rates	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	36%	66%	35%	72%	75%	50%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Employees who currently do not claim mileage may do so if Lump Sum is halved, increasing bureaucracy for the Council
- Suggestion to use AA rates rather than HMRC (higher rate and takes account of depreciation, etc)
- Suggestions to look at possibility of using alternatives (ie cycle/car pool/bus/tube)

Review criteria for Essential User Car Allowance	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	86%	87%	87%	90%	82%	25%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Strong support for review of criteria for essential user car allowance
- Staff wanted more detail on proposed criteria
- Many concerns expressed that some Managers and other staff receive essential car user allowance but do not regularly need to use their car to carry out their duties
- Concerns about who would still qualify for an allowance – using alternatives could reduce productivity
- Suggestion – link to green agenda eg smaller engine = higher payment

Apply HMRC rates to Casual Car Users	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	62%	77%	62%	78%	60%	74%

Retaining 9p per mile for leased car users	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	69%	78%	65%	80%	75%	69%

OTHER CHANGES

Harmonise Standby Arrangements	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	56%	75%	53%	81%	70%	49%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Concerns about level of cover if payments reduced

Use 30 week statutory table to replace current calculation for Redundancy payments	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	26%	28%	20%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- General lack of support
- Feels unfair to those with long service at Harrow Council
- Introduce changes for new staff only
- Changes too extreme

Pay Protection arrangements to be modified	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	35%	36%	28%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- No great strength of feeling
- Change too extreme – reduce to 2 years

Introduction of Total Reward scheme	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	57%	67%	58%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- General feeling this should not be a high priority for the Council in the current climate
- Considered a waste of resources
- View unlikely to deliver savings promised
- Childcare vouchers scheme works well

Compensation Payments for Contractual Loss	All Council Responses		Directorate staff responses		Schools support staff responses	
	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected	Of those affected	Of those not affected
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	62%	73%	67%	77%	44%	69%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Staff regularly receiving enhancements for overtime or weekend working should be compensated
- Compensation should be phased over longer period
- Compensation should be compensated even if loss less than 2.5%

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

Reduction in basic pay by 2.5% as an alternative to the modernising proposals for staff earning FTE of £17,484 per year or above	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	19%	24%	10%

Relevant comments/feedback:

- Percentage cut should be on a sliding scale, higher for high earners
- Not supported in view of no pay rise for last 3 years, Council performing well
- Feel that cutting enhancements will only affect small percentage of staff. A small pay cut for all is a fairer option
- Pay cut should be based on earnings not full time salary
- Pay cut should start higher eg H4 or H5
- Would support pay reduction if no modernising proposals implemented later
- Suggest pay freeze rather than pay cut
- Concerns regarding effect on pensions
- some support for smaller pay cut plus modified overtime/weekend proposals so all staff affected but less extreme effect

OTHER PROPOSALS – SINGLE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR ALL STAFF

Pay In Lieu of Notice	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	19%	24%	10%

Hours of Work	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	64%	70%	57%

Work base	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	51%	62%	30%

Employment Policies	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	33%	40%	20%

Expenses Policy	All Council Responses	Directorate staff responses	Schools support staff responses
Proportion of responses that agreed it was a reasonable proposal	42%	47%	34%

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

- Feedback from Directorate based staff indicates an overall awareness and acceptance that savings have to be made
- The vast majority of school staff who made specific comments, do not believe they should be included within the review, particularly as savings will not assist the Council, but will go back to the school
- A significant number of staff stated that they want the Council to continue to negotiate with Trade Unions, to try to reach a collective agreement
- There is clear strength of feeling from the feedback that the Council should look at reducing / ceasing the use of consultants and agency staff
- A small number of staff also suggested that the number of managers/supervisors is reduced and / or managers should be subject to performance related pay
- A small but significant proportion of staff, both from within Directorates and from schools, say they feel uneasy commenting on proposals which they believe will not directly affect them but will affect other staff
- Schools staff also raised concerns about potential equality issues given the majority of staff are relatively low paid and female
- A small number of staff suggested that some or all of the proposed changes should be applied to new staff only.
- A suggestion was made that a bonus structure be considered – i.e. staff share in any savings they have suggested, and also that the Council should focus on encouraging a savings culture - don't penalise managers for coming in under budget by cutting budget for following year
- Ensuring agency and consultancy staff pay charges to use telephone and internet for personal use and reviewing the way we pay for electoral duty were also suggested.
- In addition, concerns regarding impact of any reduction in pay on pensions were specifically raised at the majority of consultation meetings