

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Resources Committee – 18 February 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

National Pay Award

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Summary

This report recommends that the Resources Committee agrees to implement the Scottish Joint Council 2009 pay award in the absence of a national agreement.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Joint Council 2 year 2008/2009 national pay award, which covers APT&C and Manual Workers, is effective from 1 April 2008. Following 2 days of industrial action in 2008, the National Employers Side made a revised offer of 3% for the year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 and 2.5% for the year 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.
- 1.2 The Scottish Joint Council Trade Union Side (Unison, GMB and Unite) balloted their members on the revised offer. The members of Unison (the majority trade union) accepted the revised offer, while the members of the two minority trade unions (GMB and Unite) rejected the revised offer.
- 1.3 In view of the absence of a national agreement, Resources Committee on 3 December 2008 agreed to implement the 3% award for all staff for the year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 At the time of writing this report, there has been no formal joint response from the Joint Trade Union side at national level but it is understood that GMB have now accepted the offer.
- 2.2 COSLA has issued Industrial Relations Circulars 03/08 and 04/08 with the revised salaries from 1 April 2008 and from 1 April 2009 but has emphasised that the circulars have not been agreed with the Trade Union Side.

COSLA has advised Councils to ensure immediate implementation of the circulars in line with their established payment practices. The majority of Councils have implemented the circulars.
- 2.3 Highland Council's established payment practice is to implement National Salary Pay Awards. The COSLA circulars are not joint agreements and Resources Committee would therefore have to make a specific decision to implement the

2.5% pay award from 1 April 2009.

3. Risks

3.1 The main risks to the Council are that, in the absence of an agreement with the trade unions, the Unite trade union could continue with some form of industrial action. It would also mean that the Council is stepping outside of the national collective bargaining agreement.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The Council budget for 2009/10 already assumes a 2.5% increase in pay levels so there will be no additional financial implications.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Based on the advice issued by COSLA and the payments being made by other Councils, it is reasonable for Highland Council to proceed with paying the 2.5% increase for 2009/10.

6. Recommendation

6.1 The Resources Committee approves the implementation of the 2.5% pay award for all staff for the year 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Signature

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive

Date

Author/Reference: John Batchelor, Head of Personnel