

## Public Document Pack

### Bristol City Council Human Resources Committee



16 February 2023 at 5 pm  
Trade Union Forum Items

## Questions (from Jeff Sutton GMB Secretary Avon and Wessex Branch)

### Q1 Real Living Wage

Pay Policy Statement for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

#### Section 4 a

What was the outcome of the deliberations promised at the last HR committee meeting, regarding changing the implementation date of the RLW to that of the beginning of the year that the figures were calculated for?

This Pay Policy is technically paying the RLW a year in arrears. The RLW announced Oct 22 was for 22/23 but is still being fully implemented in the year 23/24.

#### Answer

The Council's approach is in line with the requirements of the Living Wage Foundation. The Foundation does not expect the rate announced in the Autumn to be backdated to the previous April. Were we to have done so this year this would have caused an unbudgeted pressure of more than £400k, which cannot be supported by the Council's Section 151 Officer. It is open to the Committee to recommend a different approach.

### Q2 South Bristol Rehab Centre

If 'stakeholders' were offered follow up sessions, why were staff not interviewed? Unions have often been accused of misrepresenting the views of their members, shouldn't affected staff be interviewed?

#### Answer

The inclusion of trade unionists who represent the views of their members was appropriate in this case. It's not normal practice to invite all staff involved to participate in exercises of this nature.

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# Statements

	Name	Subject(s)
1	Steve Mills Area Organiser Unison	Workforce, Contingent Workforce, The Council's Pay Policy Statement for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

## Number 1

Statement from Bristol UNISON for HR Committee February 16<sup>th</sup> 2023

### Workforce.

We note that due to the closure of St Barnabas Primary School, UNISON members are facing the threat of redundancies. Some of these are teaching assistants, with SEND specialist training and experience.

We also note that the Schools Forum are looking to expand SEND provision, thereby reducing cost.

We ask that ensure that we retain skilled employees and ensure that a proper consultation occurs with this team.

We also note that there is a shortage nationwide of these specialist roles.

<https://teach-now.co.uk/tackling-the-teaching-assistant-shortage/>

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/job-shortages-teaching-assistants-top-list>

We also note that the Authority have a statutory duty to provide education for SEND pupils and undertake adequate assessment of their needs. My understanding is that BCC have a large backlog. UNISON has constantly raised the issue that St Barnabas is an excellent resource for SEND provision and assessment. These resources include two sensory rooms, a safe enclosed play area, a 4G sports pitch, a forest school and a trained and motivated workforce.

### Contingent Workforce Report - update

We welcome the reduction of spend on agency workers. Especially during many challenges due to managing change.

However, it is unclear if this include consultants or just agency workers. We believe that the members of the HR committee would be better informed of costs to the authority, if consultants were included in these reports and the costs incurred.

It is also unclear what process managers need to undertake before they recruit agency workers, or consultants. This is especially relevant in relation to the amount of redundancies being proposed. Those displaced, could fill

some roles. Even if it is on a fixed term basis. Therefore, they could engage with redeployment for longer and the council could retain their employees and avoid unnecessary redundancy payments.

**The Council's Pay Policy Statement for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.**

We welcome the commitment to increase the lowest paid hourly rate to £10.90, an increase of £1 ph. This is especially needed during these times and the cost of living crisis. This is also a greater amount than the National living wage, which stands at £10.42ph. Thanks should be recorded, but also a commitment to paying more than the living wage in future years. Thereby ensuring that BCC is competitive and continues to recruit the best staff, to deliver services for our city.

Steve Mills Area Organiser Bristol UNISON.

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