



## **PAY CLAIM: 2022-23**

### **Submitted by Joint Trade Unions to the London Borough of Bromley**

#### **1. Introduction**

This pay claim is submitted by the joint trade unions on behalf of staff working for the London Borough of Bromley (LBB hereafter).

The claim is set at a level that we believe recognises the following key points:

- Major increases in the cost of living over recent years continue to significantly reduce the value of staff wages, with exponential impact forecast in 2022;
- Appropriate reward is needed to sustain the morale and productivity of staff in their crucial role of delivering high quality services during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Appropriate reward is needed for the increased workload and stress placed on staff against a background of major budget cuts and the pandemic;
- Average pay settlements across the economy have been running ahead of those received by Bromley Council staff over recent years, increasing the likelihood of recruitment and retention problems in the long term;
- Nobody should be paid less than the nationally recognised Foundation Living Wage (London Living Wage) rate, which has become a benchmark for the minimum level of decent pay across the UK and is now paid by large sections of the public services and many major private companies

The joint trade unions therefore submit the following claim for 2022-23, which seeks to improve and enhance the morale and productivity of our members. Meeting our claim will give LBB the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to creating a workforce which is well paid and high in morale and productivity. The claim is straightforward and realistic.

#### **2. Summary Claim**

We are seeking:

- A 10% across the board uplift with a follow through to all allowances / rates

- A £2000 home working lump sum. This to be updated each year in line with the percentage pay rise.
- A £500 Covid Hazard payment for all staff who have not been able to work from home due to the nature of the role.
- A commitment to discuss a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay.
- A phased increase of annual leave by 5 days
- A further review of the pay and grades structures following previous realignment and removal of the lowest bandings to achieve headroom above the Living Wage (National Minimum Wage) and the Foundation Living Wage (London Living Wage);
- An additional increase in rates for staff at the bottom of the pay scale to bring their pay up to the level of the Foundation Living Wage (London Living Wage) which is currently set at £11.05 per hour for 2021-22 (£10.85 for 2020);
- A review of payments and consideration of improvements to conditions in relation to additional components such as unsocial hours, gender pay, terms for working parents, and adjustments to hours;
- Special London Allowance for Residential Staff (should this apply) in accordance with the GLPC agreement (for reference, the agreed rate from 1 April 2020 was £1,200, the 2021 rate is awaited);
- Planned overtime rates in line with the GLPC recommendations for 2022-23 (see paragraph 2.4 of the Gold Book for guidance on the application of these rates);
- An agreement with the joint unions on behalf of staff in relation to the management of workloads across the Council;
- Unions are asking the Council, as a non-NJC employer, to look again at their arrangements in the light of new national pay structures as they are forthcoming;
- The advantages of the NJC pay spine are:
  - The NJC pay spine is transparent
  - Using the NJC pay spines aids comparability with other NJC employers
  - It becomes easier to apply future NJC pay awards
  - Using the NJC pay spine future proofs the employer against National Living Wage
  - Increases and so provides stability
  - The NJC pay spine provides a sound basis for future pay and grading exercises

### 3. Background to the Claim

A substantial increase will help restore and maintain living standards of the staff who have seen their real pay eroded considerably.

The greatest asset of LBB is its employees. In this pay round, our members are looking for evidence of the value that LBB places upon them for their contribution to the Council's response to the unprecedented and continued circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

This claim is both realistic and fair. The following gives full justification for the claim. The joint unions hope that LBB will give this claim the full consideration and response which employees expect and richly deserve.

### 4. Falling Value of Pay

The table below demonstrates the major fall in living standards suffered by staff over recent years.

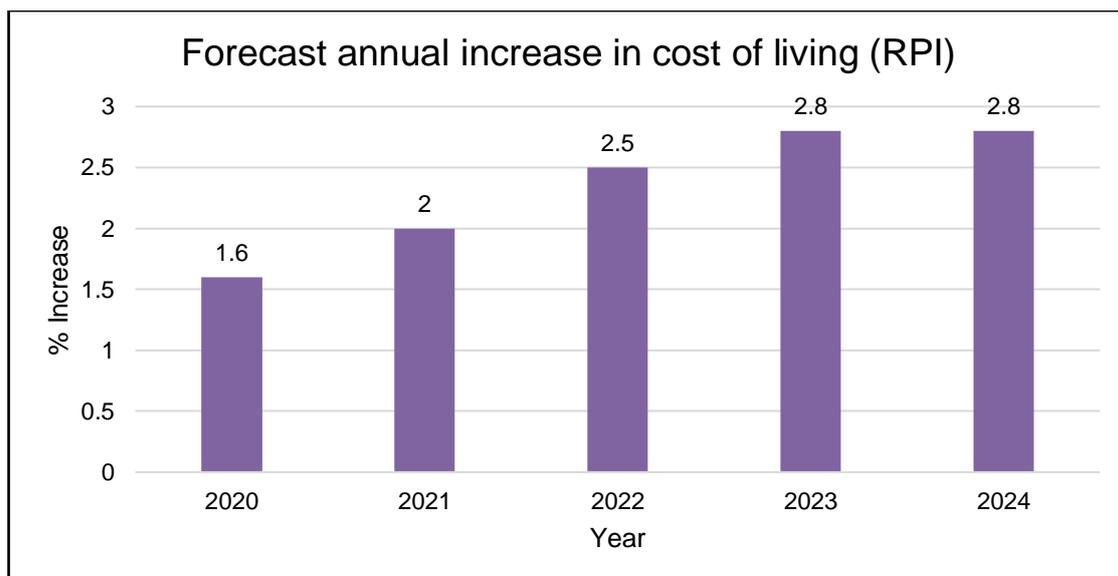
	LBB pay increases	Rise in cost of living <sup>1</sup> (as measured by <a href="#">Retail Prices Index</a> )
2012	0%	3.2%
2013	1.2%	3.0%
2014	1.2%	2.4%
2015	1.2%	1.0%
2016	1.2%	1.8%
2017	1.2%	3.6%
2018	2.0%	3.3%
2019	2.25%	2.6%
2020	2.5%	1.5%
2021	2.0%	4.1%

This means that, while the cost of living has risen by at least 25% over the last decade, pay in LBB has risen by just under 15%, equating to thousands of pounds in cuts to the value of staff wages.

The Treasury average of independent forecasts states that RPI inflation averaged 1.6% over 2020. It will then escalate every year to reach 2.8% by 2024, following the pattern shown in the graph below. These annual rates show the rate at which pay rises would be needed for wages just to maintain their current value, and this will only be exacerbated by inflation as witnessed in the past six months alone.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, Consumer Price Inflation Reference Tables, January 2021



Source: HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK Economy, May 2020

## 5. Falling Behind Average Pay Rates

The ability of LBB to attract and retain staff in the long term will be damaged if the pay of its staff falls behind the going rate in the labour market.

The table below shows that pay settlements over the last year across the economy have been running at 2%, which, while commensurate with the 2021 LBB award, maintains the gaps created by previous settlements and continues the trend of being below the NJC award (2.75% in 2020).

Year	Average pay settlements	LB Bromley pay increases
2010	2.0%	0%
2011	2.5%	0%
2012	2.5%	0%
2013	2.5%	1.2%
2014	2.5%	1.2%
2015	2.2%	1.2%
2016	2.0%	1.2%
2017	2.0%	1.2%
2018	2.5%	2.0%
2019	2.5%	2.25%
2020	2.6%	2.5%
2021	2.0%	2.0%

## 6. Recruitment and Retention Pressures Continue

Recruitment and retention are a key priority for councils. As of 2017/18, 78% of councils were experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties, with 10% feeling forced to enact a recruitment freeze at some point during 2017/18 (LGA workforce survey 2017/18). This issue is particularly acute for a variety of professional and specialist roles, including social work, planning, and building control.

Successive workforce surveys conducted by the LGA make it apparent that pressures are rising. Local Authorities reported average vacancy rate of 8% (rising to 9.5% for unitary authorities) is significantly higher than the averages for wider public sector and in the economy as a whole.

With the general unemployment rate in the UK economy set to rise as the country adapts to 'the new normal' created by Covid-19, competitive wages will only become more crucial if LBB wish to recruit and retain staff.

As temporary and agency staff are used to deal with staffing problems caused by absenteeism or recruitment and retention difficulties, this can, in turn, have a negative impact on workload and morale.

## **7. Morale Under Threat**

Working against a background of consistent cuts and the ongoing threat to services caused by the pandemic, staff have been facing greater workload pressures. The resulting increased stress puts the morale of the workforce at risk and poses a long-term threat to LBB's ability to provide a consistent quality of service.

While requesting the above, it should be noted that LBB has followed best practice in terms of Working from Home guidance to its staff to protect their physical and mental health, but members continue to raise concerns about the consistency of application of WFH guidance and the availability of suitable equipment to perform job roles remotely.

## **8. Conclusion**

There can be no doubt that all employees working for LBB have seen a significant fall in their living standards; their real earnings have fallen substantially.

To deliver a quality service, LBB relies on its workforce, and the retention of a specialist, skilled, experienced, and dedicated workforce is important to the quality-of-service delivery. Competition for that workforce from other sectors is strong.

2022 is the year in which LBB can begin to demonstrate that its workforce is included as we begin to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

This is a fair and realistic claim which we ask LBB to meet in full.