

TITLE OF REPORT: Revised Joint Local Agreement (2024)

REPORT OF: Kevin Scarlett, Interim Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities.

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Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet support for a recommendation to the Council meeting to be held on the 23rd of May 2024 to approve a revised Joint Local Agreement (JLA) with construction and highways services trade operatives.

Background

2. In July 2022 the Council approved a revised JLA with construction services trade operatives. This had been the first review of the JLA since 2004. The JLA confirmed a new salary structure for designated trade operatives, together with wider terms and conditions of service, and required ways of working.
3. The Council's collective agreement with our recognised Trade Unions requires that any changes to terms and conditions are negotiated and agreed and only implemented following a ballot of relevant employees. Following a positive ballot outcome a new Construction Services JLA took effect from September 2022.
4. In addition to construction services trade operatives, the terms and conditions of service of several highway's, environmental and fleet services related employees are also subject to a different JLA's. These have also not been reviewed for a number of years.
5. As part of the first annual review of the 2022 Construction Services JLA, consideration has been given to the creation of one single JLA covering all 'red book' employees across construction, highways, environmental and fleet services.
6. Significant progress has been made through negotiation with trade unions and a proposed new JLA is attached for consideration and recommendation to Council: see **appendix 2**.
7. Also attached, and part of the revised JLA are:
 - The Customer Promise (**appendix 3**)
 - Out of Hours Agreement (**appendix 4**)
8. This proposed 2024 JLA sets out to achieve greater consistency of terms and conditions of service, as well as required ways of working, across all construction,

highways, environmental and fleet services 'red book' employees. In addition, the proposed JLA confirms a new salary structure for relevant highways, environment, and fleet services trade operatives. Recognising significant recruitment and retention pressures, Campbell Tickell were engaged to undertake some pay benchmarking of the job roles concerned, and their findings, together with historical salary framework information, was used to inform the proposed salary structures. It is important to note that 'red book' employees are not covered by the NJC job evaluation scheme. The proposed salary structures will place the Council in a stronger position regionally to address this recruitment and retention challenge.

9. The 3 recognised trade unions in highways, environment and fleet services, GMB, Unite and Unison, are currently conducting a consultative ballot with their members, explaining what the JLA means for them, and are recommending that their members see the proposed JLA as a positive improvement to their terms and conditions of service. The results of the consultative ballot will be confirmed on the 14th of May.
10. Subject to Council approval, and a positive consultative ballot outcome, the effected employees who are covered by the proposed JLA will receive written formal confirmation of changes to their existing terms and conditions effective from 1 June 2024.

Recommendations

11. Cabinet is asked to recommend Council to agree:
 - (i) The implementation of the proposed new 2024 Joint Local Agreement covering all 'red book' employees within construction, highways, environmental and fleet services.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure greater consistency of terms and conditions, and ways of working, across all 'red book' employees.
- (ii) To improve the Council's ability to recruit and retain across these key trade operative roles.

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Policy Context

1. The revised 2024 JLA has been developed to reflect the ambitions and goals of the Council's Workforce Strategy 2022-25, including to be an employer of choice. The proposed JLA will help to ensure the Council delivers its aims to successfully recruit and retain employees, promote further learning and development of key trades related employees, and to ensure further embeddedness of new, more effective ways of working. It also ensures consistency of terms and conditions of service across both construction and highways 'red book' employees for the first time in many years.

Alternative Options

4. The alternative option of not reviewing the JLA, nor developing a new pay structure for 'red book' employees, has been discounted due to its likely impact on staff morale and dissatisfaction, difficulties in recruitment and retention, and ultimately impact on key public services delivery.

Consultation

2. Cabinet members have been consulted in drafting this report.
3. Consultation has taken place with the Council's three recognised trade unions, GMB, Unite, and Unison.

Implications of Recommendation

4. Resources

- a. **Financial Implications** – the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, confirms that the additional costs associated with the proposed new 2024 JLA will be recovered from the highways trading account for 2024/25 or from existing resources where nontraded.
- b. **Human Resources Implications** – there are a number of HR implications arising from these measures and proposals which will be mitigated by the undertaking of a ballot to provide employees with the opportunity to accept or reject the terms. Those employees impacted by the proposed JLA have been engaged by management and the trade unions are currently reviewing the JLA and making their thoughts known through the ballot process. No compulsory redundancies are anticipated with this proposal.
- c. **Property Implications** – none at present.

5. **Risk Management Implications** – Any risks associated with the measures and proposals contained in this report will be considered and managed by the HEHC Group management team and HR.

6. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – Due to the current demographic of the trade operative workforce the majority of individuals affected by the proposal are male; however, the proposal will apply to all eligible officers regardless of gender. Any potential risks will be considered and managed by the HEHC group management team and HR.
7. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – None.
8. **Health Implications** – Implementing the proposed 2024 JLA will impact positively on the Council's workforce strategy, its health and wellbeing strategy, and ultimately its Thrive ambition.
9. **Sustainability and Climate Emergency Implications** – None.
10. **Human Rights Implications** – None.
11. **Area and Ward Implications** – All wards will be affected by the proposals in this report.

Background Information

2022 JLA (construction services)