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Head of Paid Service
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Date: 12 June 2013

Dear Jeff

GLA Unison Pay Claim 2013-14

As you will be aware, it is now some years since the majority of staff at the GLA received a pay rise of any description, let alone one that bore any relation to the spiralling inflation figure. The rising cost of living, coupled with an ongoing pay freeze, has meant that since 2009, pay for local government workers has fallen by a disturbing 13% - over 3% a year. Further, anecdotal evidence tells us that increasing numbers of staff are having to consider alternative ways of supplementing their income in order to counter the crippling rising costs of food, transport, child care etc. In 2012 it was clear to GLA Unison at a fairly early stage that there was little point in seeking to begin meaningful negotiations regarding pay, as we were unlikely to achieve our goals. In 2013 however, it is clear that our members see a pay award as a must for this year and are very keen for us to make progress on this.

You will be aware that the Local Government Employers have made an offer of 1% across all pay bands to the National Joint Council. However, you will also no doubt be aware that the GLA has never recognised the NJC in respect of terms and conditions of employment, such as agreement on a 35-hour week. Moreover, it should be noted that many local authorities are offering pay settlements in excess of those achieved through NJC negotiations. This further backs up research conducted by the Local Government Chronicle in 2012 that found that 48% of non-NJC councils planned for an increase, from 0.5% up to 2.8%, and only 7% of councils are planning for a pay freeze between 2013 and 2015/6.

The cost of living

The gap between public sector pay awards and the Retail Price Index inflation rate (currently 2.8%) continues to widen, effectively handing the majority of GLA staff a pay cut each year. In January, GLA staff using TfL services to get to work were handed

above-inflation fare increases of 4.2%, and even more for many staff who commute to work from outside London. Further, major utility companies such as NPower and British Gas have raised their charges by between 6 and 9%. Our members, and the lowest paid members of staff in particular, with household budgets already stretched by high inflation and successive pay freezes, are undoubtedly going to be put under further serious pressure in the coming year. Those members will continue to be a priority for GLA Unison.

The GLA context

Organisationally, the GLA has not stood still in the years since our last significant pay increase. On the contrary, there has been a huge amount of change, both structurally and strategically. During this time staff have proved themselves to be flexible and accommodating, despite the uncertainty of two major restructures and the destabilising effects of a series of mini-restructures which have in the main seen a number of redundancies. As is invariably the case with restructures and redundancies, this has meant for many staff an increased workload but fewer colleagues to share the burden with. And all this has taken place amid the backdrop of unprecedented demands on GLA staff due to pre-Olympic Games planning and subsequent Games-time roles - for both redeployed and 'business as usual' staff - that have barely been recognised by the GLA as an organisation. At least, not recognised beyond the (albeit welcome) warm words at various times of the former Chair of the London Assembly and the Mayor.

And whilst most GLA staff have seen their pay frozen, the number of GLA employees earning over £100,000 has rocketed - not to mention the increase in pro-rata'd 'advisers' earning similar figures for a limited number of days per week whilst having other jobs. This is not an option for most GLA staff. GLA Unison takes the strong view that the pay of the lowest-paid members of staff should not be used to subsidise pay increases for the comfortably-off, and we have structured our pay claim accordingly, taking account of the ongoing pressures on the organisation's finances.

Our pay claim

Our claim this year is informed by a number of factors. First, GLA Unison stewards have been soliciting views from members as to what they feel the priorities for our claim should be. We have also asked members to complete a pay survey to further substantiate our thinking. From that survey, around 1 in 5 of respondents thought that GLA Unison should submit a claim covering all staff, while nearly 56% felt that a tapered pay claim based on a sliding scale would be most appropriate. GLA Unison has also taken account, where possible, of 'equivalents' in the public sector in arriving at these figures. Finally, we have used staff profile figures on pay and grading supplied by the GLA in order to make a reasonable claim anchored on affordability, based on the nominal 1% pay offer from Local Government Employers - a ball-park figure that GLA Unison understands has been under active consideration by GLA Management in respect of a pay award for this year. Where GLA Unison has been unable to ascertain accurate figures, we have erred on the side of caution in respect of our estimates.

Therefore, our claim is as follows:

- A pay increase of **2.5%** for Grades 1 – 4 (the GLA currently employs no staff at Grades 1 or 3).
- An increase of **2%** for Grades 5 – 7.
- An increase of **1.5%** for Grades 8 – 10.
- An increase of **1%** for Grades 11-13.

No pay increase for Grades 14 and above, or pro-rata equivalents.

In pulling together this claim, GLA Unison has worked hard to strike a balance between affordability and meeting the reasonable expectations of GLA staff. A pay award composed of these elements goes some way to demonstrating fairness by way of an increased award to the lowest-paid members of staff, as well as rewarding the hard work and commitment of the majority of GLA staff who have not received a pay award for a number of years. It should also be noted that GLA Unison's proposals would see around 95% of GLA staff receiving some sort of pay award. Further, the majority of those staff at Grades 14-15 not eligible for a pay award under this process would still in any case be in receipt of an annual incremental pay increase worth 1%.

We look forward to your response and further discussions on these matters.



David Wood

GLA Unison Branch Chair

Cc:

GLA: Martin Clarke; Juliette Carter

Unison: Paul Jenkins; Shirley Mills; Colin Britnell