

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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**Chief Executive**  
Damian Roberts

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**NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.**

Contact: Democratic Services  
[committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

14 January 2025

To: MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the General Purposes Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Committee are required to attend in person. Other Members may attend in person or participate online via MS Teams.

Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

DAMIAN ROBERTS

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

1. Guidance for the Conduct of Meetings 5 - 8

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

2. Apologies for absence

3. Notification of Substitute Members 9 - 10
4. Declarations of interest 11 - 12

Members are reminded of their obligation under the Council's Code of Conduct to disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests in any matter(s) to be considered or being considered at the meeting. These are explained in the Code of Conduct on the Council's website at [Code of conduct for members – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-for-members).

Members in any doubt about such declarations are advised to contact Legal or Democratic Services in advance of the meeting.

5. Minutes 13 - 16

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of General Purposes Committee held on 9 October 2024

#### **Matters for Recommendation to the Council**

6. Localism Act - Pay Policy 17 - 28

This report summarises the requirements of the Localism Act and presents an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

#### **Matters for Decision under Delegated Powers**

7. Pay Award 2025/26 29 - 46

This report provides Members with information to determine the Council's pay award for employees for 2025/26.

8. Adoption of the Menopause in the Workplace Policy 47 - 58

Members are asked to consider a new Menopause in the Workplace Policy. The aim of implementing a new policy is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to advocating menopause awareness within the workplace.

9. Urgent Items 59 - 60

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

#### **Matters for consideration in Private**

10. Exclusion of Press and Public 61 - 62

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

## **PART 2 - PRIVATE**

### **Matters for Decision under Delegated Powers**

11. Establishment Report 63 - 86

Reasons: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 1 and 2 – Information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

This report sets out for Members' approval a number of establishment changes recommended by Management Team. Members should note that, in accordance with adopted conventions, all of the savings/costs referred to in this report reflect the salary at the top of the scale/grade plus associated on costs.

12. Urgent Items 87 - 88

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr M R Rhodes (Chair)  
Cllr A McDermott (Vice-Chair)

Cllr B Banks  
Cllr K Barton  
Cllr A G Bennison  
Cllr M A Coffin  
Cllr J Clokey

Cllr D A S Davis  
Cllr B A Parry  
Cllr R V Roud  
Cllr K B Tanner

## **GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED**

- (1) Most of the Borough Council meetings are livestreamed, unless there is exempt or confidential business being discussed, giving residents the opportunity to see decision making in action. These can be watched via our YouTube channel. When it is not possible to livestream meetings they are recorded and uploaded as soon as possible:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxjAPfw/featured>

- (2) There are no fire drills planned during the time a meeting is being held. For the benefit of those in the meeting room, the fire alarm is a long continuous bell and the exits are via the doors used to enter the room. An officer on site will lead any evacuation.
- (3) Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) in the first instance.

### **Attendance:**

- Members of the Committee are required to attend in person and be present in the meeting room. Only these Members are able to move/ second or amend motions, and vote.
- Other Members of the Council can join via MS Teams and can take part in any discussion and ask questions, when invited to do so by the Chair, but cannot move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters. Members participating remotely are reminded that this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Occasionally, Members of the Committee are unable to attend in person and may join via MS Teams in the same way as other Members. However, they are unable to move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters if they are not present in the meeting room. As with other Members joining via MS Teams, this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Officers can participate in person or online.

- Members of the public addressing an Area Planning Committee should attend in person. However, arrangements to participate online can be considered in certain circumstances. Please contact [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) for further information.

Before formal proceedings start there will be a sound check of Members/Officers in the room. This is done as a roll call and confirms attendance of voting Members.

### **Ground Rules:**

The meeting will operate under the following ground rules:

- Members in the Chamber should indicate to speak in the usual way and use the fixed microphones in front of them. These need to be switched on when speaking or comments will not be heard by those participating online. Please switch off microphones when not speaking.
- If there any technical issues the meeting will be adjourned to try and rectify them. If this is not possible there are a number of options that can be taken to enable the meeting to continue. These will be explained if it becomes necessary.

For those Members participating online:

- please request to speak using the 'chat or hand raised function';
- please turn off cameras and microphones when not speaking;
- please do not use the 'chat function' for other matters as comments can be seen by all;
- Members may wish to blur the background on their camera using the facility on Microsoft teams.
- Please avoid distractions and general chat if not addressing the meeting
- Please remember to turn off or silence mobile phones

### **Voting:**

Voting may be undertaken by way of a roll call and each Member should verbally respond For, Against, Abstain. The vote will be noted and announced by the Democratic Services Officer.

Alternatively, votes may be taken by general affirmation if it seems that there is agreement amongst Members. The Chairman will announce the outcome of the vote for those participating and viewing online.

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<b>General Purposes Committee</b>					
	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Liberal Democratic</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Ind. Kent Alliance</b>	<b>Labour</b>
1	Robin Betts	David Thornewell	Lee Athwal		Paul Hickmott
2	Matt Boughton	Michelle Tatton	Steve Crisp		Wayne Mallard
3	Robert Cannon	Anita Oakley	Mark Hood		
4	Des Keers	Frani Hoskins	Robert Oliver		
5	Adem Mehmet	Garry Bridge	Stacey Pilgrim		

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Declarations of interest

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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES

Wednesday, 9th October, 2024

**Present:** Cllr M R Rhodes (Chair), Cllr A McDermott (Vice-Chair), Cllr B Banks, Cllr K Barton, Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr K B Tanner

Cllr P M Hickmott and Cllr W E Palmer\* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(\*participated via MS Teams)

#### PART 1 - PUBLIC

##### **GP 24/22 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute members.

##### **GP 24/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

##### **GP 24/24 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 12 June 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

##### **GP 24/25 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) - REVISIONS TO SURVEILLANCE GUIDANCE**

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive asked Members to consider minor changes to the Council's guidance on surveillance.

As a matter of policy, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council sought to carry out enforcement activity by overt means. The result of this was that covert activity was undertaken only as a last resort. No use had been made of the covert surveillance powers available to the Borough Council under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 since 2010.

The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office had indicated that they would not be undertaking an inspection during the current year and that they had no concerns with the Council's policy.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That the revised surveillance guidance at Annex 1 be approved, subject to the replacement of Twitter with X.

**\*Recommended to Council**

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

#### **GP 24/26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

**RESOLVED:** That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

### **PART 2 - PRIVATE**

### **MATTERS FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

#### **GP 24/27 ESTABLISHMENT REPORT**

(Reasons: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 1 and 2 – Information relating to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

The report set out for Member's approval a number of establishment changes recommended by the Management team. Members noted that, in accordance with adopted conventions, all of the savings/costs referred to in the report reflected the salary at the top of the scale/grade plus associated on costs.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the creation of a new two-year, fixed term, part time Safeguarding Officer post, be noted;
- (2) the Electoral Services Officer post (DC0403) be deleted with effect from 10 October 2024;
- (3) the hours of the Parking Support Officer post (DE0505) be decreased from 22.2 to 18.5 hours with effect from 10 October 2024;
- (4) the temporary Customer Service Advisor post (DB0396), 14.5 hours, be permanently established with effect from 10 October 2024; and

- (5) the hours of the Customer Service Adviser post (DB0309) be increased from 22 to 34.7 hours per week with effect from 10 October 2024.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That

- (6) that the permanent establishment of four full time Civil Enforcement Officer posts at scale 4 and one full time Civil Enforcement Supervisor at scale 5 with effect from 23 October 2024, be approved.

**\*Recommended to Council**

The meeting ended at 8.03 pm

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## General Purposes Committee

22 January 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Recommendation to Council



Cabinet Member	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer	Adrian Stanfield, Director Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive
Report Author	Mathew Brooks, Head of Human Resources & Development

#### Localism Act - Pay Policy

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report summarises the requirements of the Localism Act and presents an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Having a robust Pay Policy Statement assists the Council in achieving its priority of "Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council".

##### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that this committee commends the pay policy in Annex 1 to this report for adoption at the Council meeting on 18 February 2025.

##### 4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to review their pay policy statement for each financial year. This report summarises the requirements of the Act and presents an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

##### 5 Contents of the updated Pay Policy Statement

- 5.1 Members will note that there have not been many significant changes in the Council's remuneration policy. The substantive content of the updated Pay Policy Statement in Annex 1 is nearly identical to the Council's Pay Policy Statement for

2024/25. The key updates are related to the actual pay received by staff, the pay multiple data and the number of officers in specific graded posts.

- 5.2 The title “chief officer” includes both statutory and non-statutory chief officers and their deputies. Therefore, within the Pay Policy Statement set out in Annex 1, the information about the remuneration of chief officers pertains to the Establishment on 1 April 2024. The post of Chief Executive was filled on an interim basis on that date. Therefore, the statement includes the posts of the Interim Chief Executive and their Deputy, the Council’s two Directors as well as the senior officers that are directly accountable to these “chief officers”.
- 5.3 The Act’s definition of remuneration includes pay, charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, enhancement of pension entitlements and termination payments. All of these elements have been covered in the pay policy statement attached in Annex 1.
- 5.4 In order to provide a holistic and transparent context for the remuneration of chief officers and their deputies, the pay policy in Annex 1 provides an overview of the pay elements for all Council employees.

## **6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 6.1 There are no additional financial resource implications as a result of the Pay Policy Statement as it is setting out what is already in place. The aim of Section 38 of the Localism Act is to ensure there is openness and transparency with regard to the allocation of public money to employee remuneration.

## **7 Risk Assessment**

- 7.1 The Council is legally obliged to comply with the Localism Act’s requirement to have reviewed the Pay Policy Statement by 31 March 2025.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The policy set out in Annex 1 contains all of the elements of a statutory pay policy as stipulated in section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.
- 8.2 The attached pay policy is also compliant with Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England & Wales) Regulations 2006 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 & 2014.
- 8.3 The definition of the terms “chief officer” and “deputy chief officer” is in accordance with section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

## 9 Consultation and Communications

9.1 No formal consultation with staff or trade unions have been undertaken in the production of the new Pay Policy Statement due to the lack of any substantial changes.

## 10 Implementation

10.1 The updated Pay Policy Statement will take effect on 1 April 2025.

## 11 Cross Cutting Issues

11.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

11.1.1 A moderate source of emissions is likely to be maintained at current levels or increased.

11.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

11.2 Equalities and Diversity

11.2.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

11.2.2 The Equality Act 2010 places requirements upon all public sector bodies to ensure that its policies and procedures are promoting equality. The measures summarised within the Pay Policy Statement support this requirement.

11.3 Other If Relevant

- Human Resources

11.3.1 The Pay Policy Statement applies to all members of the Council's workforce.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

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# Annex 1

## Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

### Introduction

When determining remuneration levels, the Council is mindful of the requirement to balance the needs of managing scarce public resources with the need to secure and retain high-quality employees.

The Council aligns its reward strategy with organisational needs by an emphasis on cash rewards, and ensuring that pay is determined by job requirements.

The Council aims to operate a consistent and equitable organisation-wide reward system by placing the responsibility for remuneration decisions with a committee of elected councillors, the General Purposes Committee, and the responsibility for administering the pay policy within the Council's Human Resources team.

Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires the council to prepare an annual pay policy statement for 2025/26. The Act specifies that the following must be included in the pay policy statement:

- the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer
- the policy on the remuneration of chief officers on recruitment
- increases and additions to their remuneration including performance related pay, bonuses, charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind and termination payments
- a definition of the "lowest paid employees" and the policy on the remuneration of this group
- the policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers
- the policy on re-employing someone who has been made redundant.

This statement will be published on the Council's website.

### **Section 1 – Remuneration of statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers**

The term "chief officer" within The Localism Act includes both statutory and non-statutory chief officers, and their deputies. The actual remuneration for these roles is available on the Council's website <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/council/council-works-constitution/2>

The salary scales for the statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers in post on 1 April 2024 is set out below.

<b>No of chief officers</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>% of M2 benchmark</b>	<b>Pay Point Range</b>
14 (1 part time)	M7	51.0%	131-134
10 (1 part time)	M6	56.0%	141- 144
4	M5	61.0%	147 - 150
6	M4	70.0%	151- 154
2	M2a	97.5%	181- 184
1	M2	100%	186-189
1	M1	125.0%	191- 194

### **Fee for acting as the Returning Officer**

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is required to appoint a Returning Officer by virtue of section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

In Tonbridge & Malling, the Chief Executive has been appointed as the Returning Officer. This is a personal appointment, separate from their other duties. In this capacity they are the Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary elections and elections to the Borough Council and to Parish Councils within this Borough.

The Returning Officer fee is payable for the substantial additional duties undertaken, and leadership required of the Returning Officer in planning, delivering and undertaking the elections, and recognises the personal nature and personal responsibility of the role of the Returning Officer.

For Borough and Parish Council elections, the Returning Officer fee is calculated in accordance with an agreed Kent Scale of Fees. For National, and Police & Crime Commissioner elections the fee rate is set by central government.

### **Section 2 – Remuneration of the lowest paid employees**

In compliance with Section 38 of the Localism Act, for the purposes of this statement the “lowest paid employee” has been defined as those who are engaged by the Council as Cleaners.

On 1 April 2024 employees in these posts received a full-time annual salary equivalent of approximately £22,128.

### **Section 3 – Decision on pay**

The pay of all council employees (including chief officers) is determined by the evaluated grade of the post. The pay band for most jobs within the council (including chief officers) is very narrow, typically based on 3 or 4 incremental points.

Progression through the pay band is based on length of service, subject to the achievement of expected performance standards, and thus recognises development in a role over time based on the accumulation of experience and knowledge.

It is anticipated that during 2025/26 the total number of permanent and fixed term contract staff on the Council's payroll will be approximately 265 in any one month.

The Council has not adopted the national local government job evaluation or grading schemes but has developed a locally negotiated framework that more closely reflects its own requirements.

Within this framework there are two remuneration "families". The first has been developed for the Council's professional and senior managerial cohorts, and includes chief officers. The second is for supervisory, technical and administrative staff.

All staff (including chief officers) are appointed to the organisation at the bottom of the grade, unless there are exceptional circumstances based on business need.

#### **Annual Pay Award**

The salary of all council employees (including chief officers) may increase annually by an annual pay award which is locally determined taking into consideration:

- "caps" on public sector pay rates set by the Government
- the council's ability to pay
- inflation levels
- the "going rate" of pay awards in neighbouring authorities and nationally
- recruitment and retention levels.

### **Section 4 – Pay structure and pay relationships.**

The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency September 2011 requires that there is a process established to monitor the rate of growth of senior earnings compared to all other employees in the organisation.

On 1 April 2024 there was a multiple of 6.15 between the base level salary of the Interim Chief Executive and the lowest paid member of staff, reflecting the differences in skill sets, complexity and span of control from the lowest to the highest paid employees of the Council.

The salary (inclusive of allowances) for the post of Interim Chief Executive was £136,096 (as at 1 April 2024).

The median full time equivalent salary for all other employees in Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is in the region of £33,297, the mean full time equivalent salary is in the region of £38,673. The pay multiple is therefore approximately 4.08 against the median and 3.52 against the mean.

The Council's bespoke grading structure for employees with professional and specialised high level skill sets is entitled the "M" grade framework. All those referred to as chief officers within this pay policy statement fall within the "M grade" framework.

A feature of the M grade framework is that the remuneration levels for all M grade posts (including those of chief officers), are fixed as a percentage of the benchmark grade M2. Therefore, the grading structure specifies the pay multiples attached to each grade as a percentage of the lowest incremental point of grade M2.

Posts are positioned within the M grade framework on the basis of the required specialist knowledge, professional skills, depth of professional and managerial judgement, and managerial span of control. Broadly speaking the range of capabilities required for junior M grade posts (M9 – M7 inclusive) equate to professional and/or managerial capability equivalent to qualification Level 6.

Those occupying senior managerial posts graded M6 to M4 are required to possess both professional and managerial skill sets equivalent to Level 7. All three director level chief officer posts are graded as M2a. The professional and managerial capabilities and span of control required at director level broadly equate to Level 8.

A Level 8 degree of professional and managerial expertise is also required for the post of the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive. This, alongside the extensive span of control intrinsic to the role of paid head of service for the entire Council workforce, merits the grade of M1 for the Chief Executive and M2 for their deputy.

### **Supervisory, technical and clerical grades**

The council has developed a bespoke grading structure for its supervisory, technical and clerical staff that ranges from the grade of senior officer to clerical scale 1. Broadly speaking the managerial, professional and skill set required for posts graded Senior Officer equate to qualification Level 5, posts



graded scale 5-6 equate to Level 4, posts graded scale 3-4 to Level 3, posts graded scale 1-2 require a Level 1-2 skill set.

The Council considers that the relationship between the base salaries of its highest and lowest paid employees, as well as the relationship between the highest paid and the mean and medial salaries of the entire workforce, represents an appropriate, fair and equitable internal pay relationship.

## **Section 5 – Policies common to all employees**

The following elements of remuneration are determined by corporate policies or arrangements which apply to all permanent employees of the Council (including its chief officers and deputy chief officers), regardless of their pay level, status or grading. Full details on any of the policies listed below can be provided on request.

The Council aims to have a streamlined and transparent pay structure and therefore it does not pay performance related or total contribution bonuses, location allowances, or subsidy towards child care costs.

Pension contributions for all employees opting to join the Local Government Pension Scheme are nationally determined.

### **Payments on termination of employment**

According to the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 the Council has the power to make discretionary payments on early termination of employment.

The Council has determined that it will calculate payments made to any eligible employee (including chief officers) who are made redundant or who depart on the grounds of the efficiency of the service by using the Government's statutory redundancy payment calculator formula and the employee's actual weekly pay.

For those who depart on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency of the service, the Council does not increase the employee's total pension scheme membership (other than those staff aged over 55, in line with the rules of the Local Government Scheme) or award additional pension. This response to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 applies to all employees, including chief and deputy chief officers.

For those who chose to retire "early", the Council does not increase the employee's total pension scheme membership or award additional pension.

The Council's policy is that it does not re-employ anyone (including chief or deputy chief officers) who has left with a severance or redundancy payment,

nor does it re-engage them on a self-employed basis with a contract for services.

### **Market Supplement Payments**

The Council introduced a Recruitment & Retention Market Supplement Policy in October 2023.

The Council may utilise a market supplement to ensure that competitive salaries will attract and retain key workers in skill shortage areas without distorting the pay structures for all other employees.

A market supplement for recruitment or retention purposes will only be used where there are clear business reasons that cannot be better addressed through the other means, such as job design, utilising existing skills within the department or service or use of temporary or agency staff for a time limited period.

It is recognised that pay is only one factor contributing to our attractiveness as an employer and other aspects of the employment offer, particularly those relating to development, should be applied in the first instance rather than using a market supplement.

### **Car allowances**

For those posts where it is deemed that there is an essential requirement for the post holder to use a car to perform their job, and they are expected to travel in excess of 2,500 miles per annum in the course of their duties, the post holder receives a lump sum Essential Car User allowance to contribute towards the associated running costs of the car in accordance with the rates previously set by the National Joint Council.

The Council previously had a lease car scheme which has not been open to new staff to join since June 2020. The lease car scheme is now no longer in operation as of November 2022 when the last remaining lease car holder ceased their participation in the scheme.

The Council no longer pays an equivalent payment as an alternative to a lease car but certain specific posts have been identified to receive a Car Allowance.

### **Telephone allowances**

Those employees who are deemed to be essential users of mobile telephones receive a mobile telephone allowance or a Council issued mobile phone.

### **Professional fees**

Annual professional subscription fees to one relevant professional body are reimbursed to those employees where it is deemed an essential requirement for the post holder to belong to a professional institute.

### **Reimbursement of removal/relocation costs on appointment and mortgage subsidy scheme**

The Council's relocation and mortgage subsidy schemes provide financial assistance (within pre-defined limits) to employees who re-locate from outside a reasonable travel area to the Borough to take up an appointment with the Council.

### **Subsistence Allowance**

The Council reimburses expenditure on meals, accommodation, and any other expenses necessarily (within pre-defined limits) incurred by employees who have to be away from home on Council business.

### **Standby and call out allowances**

Any employee who is required to undertake standby and call-out duties will be recompensed at the appropriate rate in accordance with the negotiated policy and payment rate for their role.

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## General Purposes Committee

22 January 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Delegated



Cabinet Member	Not Applicable
Responsible Officer	Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
Report Author	Mathew Brooks, Head of HR & Development

#### Pay Award 2025/26

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information to determine the Council's pay award for employees for 2025/26.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Ensuring that the Council's pay remain competitive with neighbouring Councils and those within the wider job market, should ensure that the Council can successfully recruit and retain staff with the appropriate skillset to deliver the Council's priorities.

##### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To apply a pay award of 3% to all salary scales with effect from 1 April 2025.
- 3.2 To delete salary scales 1 and 2 from the Council's pay scale.

##### 4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 All Council employees have a term in their contracts which reads "*Salaries will be revised on 1 April each year by an amount determined by the Authority having regard to movements in the Retail Price Index, comparative pay settlements and prevailing economic conditions.*" This Council determines its own pay awards, and is not tied into the national process of collective bargaining.

4.2 The last increase in employees' salaries on 1 April 2024 was an award of £1,900 paid to all spinal column points for staff graded on scales 1-6 and to Senior Officer (SO) grades. A flat rate of 5% was paid to all staff on M Grades.

4.3 This report considers a range of factors that are relevant to the issue of a pay award for 2025/26 and provides Members with information to consider in determining the pay award for employees.

#### 4.4 **Prevailing Economic Conditions**

4.4.1 Members will be aware of the on-going need to make savings and transformation contributions in the context of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The Council still faces a significant funding gap over the 10-year period of the MTFs.

4.4.2 A factor that Members will need to consider this year in determining a pay award is a further, above inflation rise of the National Living Wage (NLW) from 1 April 2025. The Government has announced that the NLW will rise by 6.7% on 1 April 2025, from £11.44 per hour to £12.21 per hour, an increase of £0.77 per hour.

4.4.3 The Council has a legal obligation to not pay below the NLW. If a pay award is not awarded, then it must be noted that some form of pay increase will have to be applied to the Council's spinal column points (**Annex 1 Current TMBC Pay Scales 2024/25**) 313-316 to ensure staff on these grades do not fall below the NLW from 1 April 2024 or these staff will need to be moved to scp 317 in order to ensure they do not fall below the NLW.

4.4.4 The most recently published Retail Price Index (RPI) rate (in November 2024) was 3.6% and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) most recent published figure (in November 2024), was 2.6%.

#### 4.5 **Comparative Pay Settlements**

4.5.1 At the time of writing, no Kent Authorities have settled their pay awards for 2025/26, and most are engaged in ongoing negotiations.

4.5.2 There is no indication as yet of what the national pay award (NJC) offer for 2025/26 will be. The national pay award for 2024/25 was only agreed in November 2024 and backdated to 1 April 2024. The agreed pay award was a flat rate of £1,290 applied to all pay grades. This award equated to between 2.55% - 5.7% increase depending on the salary.

4.5.3 In December 2024, Government departments have recommended a pay rise of 2.8% for millions of public sector workers including teachers, NHS staff and senior civil servants next year. The recommendations will now be considered by the various different public sector pay review bodies.

4.5.4 It may be helpful to Members of this Committee to provide a historical context in terms of recent pay awards.

- 4.5.5 From 2010-2012 there were no pay awards and salaries remained “frozen” at the 2009 level. From 2013-2015 there were pay awards of 1%; an award of 2% over 2 years was made for the period April 2016 to March 2018.
- 4.5.6 The award for 2018/19 was 2%, for 2019/20 and 2020/21 the award was 2.5%, for 2021/22 it was 1% and for 2022/23 it was 2%. The pay award for 2023/24 was 5%. The pay award for 2024/25 was £1,900 for staff on scale 1 to SO and 5% for M grade staff.

## **5 Proposal**

- 5.1 The cost of living and Public Sector pay has continued to be a very high-profile topic throughout 2024.
- 5.2 Although the rate of inflation has fallen significantly over the last twelve months, the current rate of inflation suggests that a pay award is necessary.
- 5.3 The trade union, UNISON, submitted their claim to the Chief Executive and the Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive in January 2025. UNISON's pay claim for 2025/26 can be found in full, in Annex 2 of this report.
- 5.4 UNISON's pay claim for 2025/26 is to pay all salary points and allowances an increase of 6% or a flat rate of £2,400, whichever is the higher. In addition, UNISON have requested that Council aligns its lowest spinal column point with the Real Living Wage. The Real Living Wage is £12.60 per hour.
- 5.5 The cost of implementing UNISON's pay claim is £913,000, which is an additional £510,000 above the provision the Council has made for pay award inflation for 2025/26
- 5.6 An overriding imperative for the Council is to contain its expenditure on salaries in order to retain a stable employment position that, in turn, will be to the overall benefit of staff, continue the delivery of good quality services, and help to achieve a balanced budget. Maintaining our ability to recruit, retain and motivate staff with the appropriate skill sets to meet the Council's priorities and future challenges ahead is also of vital importance.
- 5.7 Provision for pay inflation for 2025/26 has been made in the draft Revenue Estimates for 2025/26 (being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January) of £403,000. If an equal percentage was paid to all staff, then this would equate to a pay award of 3% to all staff.
- 5.8 I feel that it is appropriate to consider an award that recognises the continuing efforts of staff at all levels to 'do more with less'. An award will reinforce a message of support and encouragement to our staff.

5.9 It is also important from a recruitment and retention point of view, with national skill shortages across key professional areas that the Council does not fall significantly behind other employers.

5.10 I recommend that a 3% pay award to staff for 2025/26 in order to maintain a competitive position with other employers in the recruitment market.

### 5.11 Impact of a 3% pay award

5.11.1 If Members were minded approving the recommendation of a 3% pay award then it will ensure that all staff receive an equitable pay award. Historically, this has always been the Council's preferred approach.

5.11.2 A 3% pay award will ensure that the pay award remains within the provision the Council has made for pay inflation.

5.11.3 The National Living Wage rising by 6.7% to £12.21 per hour from 1 April 2025 will impact on the Council's grades at the lower end of the salary scales.

5.11.4 Applying a 3% pay award to scales 1, 2 and the first spinal column point (spc) of scale 3 (spc 314) from April 2025 will not be sufficient to lift these grades above the National Living Wage amount of £12.21 as shown in the table below:

Scale	Spinal Column Point	Current Annual Salary	Current Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate wef 1/4/2025 with 3% award
2	313	22,128	11.47	<b>11.81</b>
3	314	22,536	11.68	<b>12.03</b>
	315	22,980	11.91	12.27
	316	23,496	12.18	12.54
	317	24,051	12.47	12.84
4	318	24,495	12.7	13.08
	319	25,365	13.15	13.54
	320	26,241	13.6	14.01
	321	27,159	14.08	14.50

5.11.5 The National Living Wage has risen significantly in recent years in response to The Low Pay Commission's (LPC) remit of ensuring that the NLW meets its target of 66% of median earnings. This target was met in 2024 and in September 2024, the government gave the LPC a new remit to ensure the NLW doesn't fall below 66% of median hourly earnings.



- 5.11.6 The above inflation rise of the NLW over the past four years has impacted on the Council's salary scales. The Council has not been able to use its scale 1 for the past three years and only one point of scale 2 currently sits above the NLW.
- 5.11.7 As detailed above, the Council approved a two-tier pay award in 2024/25 in order to maintain the Council's pay structure and keep scale 2 above the NLW.
- 5.11.8 It is not my recommendation to keep proposing a two-tier pay award as a response to the National Living Wage. An increasing number of Councils have simply deleted their lower graded spinal columns points and adjusted where they place staff on their grades accordingly.
- 5.11.9 The Council has utilised scale 1 and 2 in the past for lower skilled basic clerical and operative roles. The Council has just three members of staff on scale 1 and four members of staff on scale 2.
- 5.11.10 From 1 April 2025, it is proposed to fully delete the existing scales 1 and 2 and the first spinal column point of scale 3 as this would fall below the NLW following a 3% pay award.
- 5.11.11 This would mean that the 3 members of staff on scale 1 would move to the second point of scale 3 (spc 315) and the four members of staff on scale 2 would move to the third point of scale 3 (spc 316). These would be classed as a 'spot salary' points meaning they would not progress further up the spinal column point for scale 3.
- 5.11.12 All staff currently on scale 3 would be moved to the top of scale 3, spc 317.
- 5.11.13 This proposal ensures that there is still a pay differential between the small numbers of staff on scales 1 and 2 with staff on scale 3.

## **6 Other Options**

- 6.1 An alternative option for consideration is to offer a two-tier pay award, similar to what was agreed for 2024/25 pay award.
- 6.2 A fixed pay award of £1,200 could be paid to staff from scale 1 to scale 6 and to staff on the Senior Officer (SO) grade. All staff on M grades would receive a fixed 3% pay award.

As the table below shows, this would result in a pay award of between 5.32% - 3.01% for scale 1 to SO grades.

Scale	Spinal Column Point	Current Annual Salary	Current Hourly Rate	1/4/2025 £1200 pay award	Hourly Rate £1200 pay award	% Increase £1200
2	313	22,128	11.47	23,328	12.09	5.42
3	314	22,536	11.68	23,736	12.30	5.32
	315	22,980	11.91	24,180	12.53	5.22
	316	23,496	12.18	24,696	12.80	5.11
	317	24,051	12.47	25,251	13.09	4.99
4	318	24,495	12.70	25,695	13.32	4.90
	319	25,365	13.15	26,565	13.77	4.73
	320	26,241	13.60	27,441	14.22	4.57
	321	27,159	14.08	28,359	14.70	4.42
5 (top of scale)	325	30,375	15.74	31,575	16.37	3.95
6 (top of scale)	328	33,297	17.26	34,497	17.88	3.60
SO (top of scale)	334	39,909	20.69	41,109	21.31	3.01
M9 (bottom of scale)	111	40,587	21.04	41,805	21.67	3.00*
<b>*all further M grades to M1 to receive 3% pay award</b>						

- 6.3 This option gives lower paid staff a higher percentage pay award up to a very small differential to M grade staff, 3.01% at the top of the SO grade compared to 3% at the bottom of the M9 grade.
- 6.4 Until the current financial year, the Council has previously always favoured an equal percentage pay award paid to all staff. This option pays M grade staff a smaller percentage pay award compared to staff on the main pay scale.
- 6.5 The main reason for not recommending this two-tier option is that it would cost an additional £47,000 above the budgeted provision for pay inflation and would not achieve the goal of being perceived as fair to all Council employees.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The determination of a pay award for 2025/26 is driven by three key factors – the need to maintain the Council's ability to recruit and retain staff in a highly competitive environment, particularly for professional roles, the need to comply

with the revised National Minimum Wage, and the need for a pay award that recognises the contribution of all staff in the Council.

- 7.2 In addition, there are significant risks associated with awarding disproportionately lower percentage pay awards to M grade staff where the Council faces the greatest recruitment and retention challenges and compromises the integrity of the Council's formal pay structure.
- 7.3 I think it is appropriate to look to delete our current scales 1 and 2 regardless of which of the proposed options Members choose.
- 7.4 I am also conscious that the Council has made provision for pay inflation within the draft Revenue Estimates 2025/26 of £403,000.
- 7.5 The most equitable option remains to award all staff the same percentage pay award of 3% regardless of their grade.

## **8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 8.1 A flat rate 3% pay award to all staff, would cost £403,000. This would not cost above the provision the Council has made for pay award inflation for 2025/26 and would therefore be 'within budget'.
- 8.2 To award staff a two-tier pay award, pay £1,200 to staff on scales 1-SO and M Grade staff 3% would cost an additional £47,000 above the provision the Council has made for pay award inflation for 2025/26.
- 8.3 Members allowances will also rise in-line with the agreed percentage of the staff pay award.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 The Council will need to closely monitor movements in pay awards in future years not only amongst neighbouring authorities but also in the private sector as there is a risk that some staff, whom it may be in the Council's interest to retain for the future, may be attracted to the potentially higher rewards elsewhere.
- 9.2 The Council lists recruitment and retention issues on the Strategic Risk register. If a below inflation pay award is given to staff this could increase the level of risk to the Council.

## **10 Legal Implications**

- 10.1 The Council has a contractual requirement to review our salary levels annually but no obligation to increase them by any set amount or in response to movement in either the RPI or the CPI.

## **11 Consultation and Communications**

11.1 The Council has engaged with colleagues from UNISON and has considered their proposal for the 2025/26 pay award.

11.2 The Council does not require formal agreement through consultation with either UNISON or any other trade union in order to determine its pay award.

## **12 Implementation**

12.1 The pay award will be implemented on 1 April 2025.

## **13 Cross Cutting Issues**

### 13.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

13.1.1 A moderate source of emissions is likely to be maintained at current levels or increased.

13.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

### 13.2 Equalities and Diversity

13.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### 13.3 Other If Relevant

- Human Resources
- Business Continuity / Resilience

13.3.1 Human Resources – Pay Policy statement.

13.3.2 Business Continuity / Resilience – a pay award of 3% is being recommended to ensure that pay remain competitive both with neighbouring Councils and the wider job market to ensure the Council can successfully recruit and retain staff with the appropriate skillset to deliver the Council’s priorities.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 – 2024/2025 salary scales Annex 2 – UNISON pay claim for 2025/26

**TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FULL TIME SALARIES**

<b>LOCAL FROM 01.04.24</b>		
Scale		£
1	301	12,756
	302	13,485
	303	14,430
	304	15,183
	305	16,122
	306	17,013
	307	17,865
	308	18,873
	309	19,989
	310	21,201
2	311	21,201
	312	21,615
	<b>313</b>	<b>22,128</b>
3	314	22,536
	315	22,980
	316	23,496
	317	24,051
4	318	24,495
	319	25,365
	320	26,241
	321	27,159
5	322	27,822
	323	28,599
	324	29,478
	325	30,375
6	326	31,296
	327	32,277
	328	33,297
SO	329	34,551
	330	35,646
	331	36,732
	332	37,749
	333	38,829
	334	39,909

<b>TMBC GRADES</b>	
	scp
1	301 to 311
2	311 to 313
3	314 to 317
4	318 to 321
5	322 to 325
6	326 to 328
SO	329 to 334

<b>PROTECTED SCALES</b>	
Scale	Protected scp
1	312 to 313
2	314 to 315
3	318 to 319
4	322 to 323
5	326 to 327
6	329 to 330

<b>First Aid Allowance</b>	
2024/25	£198.00

<b>Years of LG Service</b>	<b>Long Service Award</b>
20-24	175
25-29	200
30-34	240
35-39	280
40-44	370
45 or more	410

<b>M GRADE FROM 01.04.24</b>			
			£
M9	<b>41.0%</b>	111	40,587
		112	41,400
		113	42,213
		114	43,026
		115	43,845
		116	44,667
		117	45,480
M8	<b>46.0%</b>	121	48,273
		122	49,191
		123	50,115
		124	51,027
M7	<b>51.0%</b>	131	53,520
		132	54,537
		133	55,563
		134	56,571
M6	<b>56.0%</b>	141	58,767
		142	59,886
		143	61,008
		144	62,118
M5	<b>61.00%</b>	147	64,017
		148	65,232
		149	66,456
		150	67,665
M4	<b>70.0%</b>	151	73,566
		152	74,961
		153	76,368
		154	77,754
M4a	<b>75.0%</b>	161	78,816
		162	80,307
		163	81,813
		164	83,301
M3	<b>80.4%</b>	171	84,477
		172	86,082
		173	87,696
		174	89,289
M3a	<b>85.0%</b>	176	89,307
		177	91,002
		178	92,706
		179	94,392
M2a	<b>97.5%</b>	181	102,423
		182	104,367
		183	106,323
		184	108,258
M2	<b>100.0%</b>	186	105,048
		187	107,043
		188	109,047
		189	111,030
M1	<b>125.0%</b>	191	131,283
		192	133,776
		193	136,284
		194	138,759

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## PAY CLAIM FOR 2025/2026

### Submitted by UNISON to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

This pay claim is submitted by Tonbridge and Malling Branch of UNISON on behalf of employees working for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

#### **Foreword**

The Council's pay award for April 2024, which included a flat rate increase for grades up to SO and a 5% rise for higher grades, was accepted by the majority of our UNISON members.

Overall, our members viewed this award as fairer than those in previous years, as it more closely reflected the prevailing inflation rate at the time—especially when compared to the previous year, when inflation had peaked at 11.6% in early 2023, but our wages were only increased by 5% that April.

#### **Historical Pay Trends**

The Council's pay awards have historically lagged behind inflation almost every year, over many years. Table 1 and Chart 2 illustrate this trend.

**Table 1: TMBC Pay Awards vs. Cost of Living (2011-2024)**

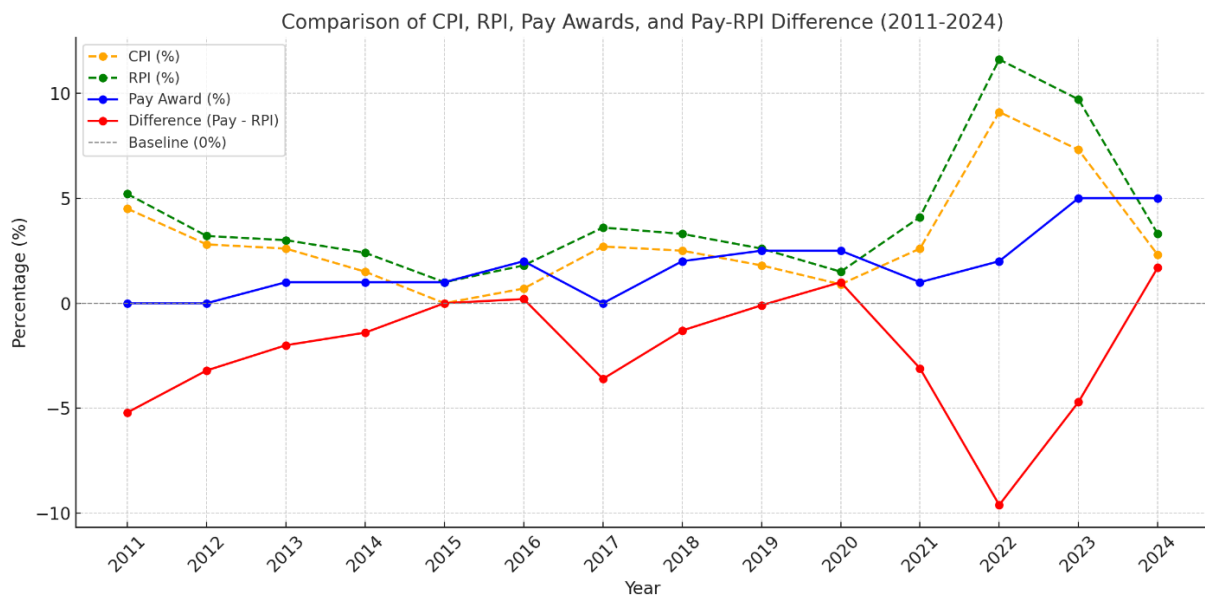
Source ONS

Year	CPI %	RPI %	Our Pay Award (%)	Difference between TMBC pay & RPI (%)
2011	4.5	5.2	0	-5.2
2012	2.8	3.2	0	-3.2
2013	2.6	3.0	1	-2.0
2014	1.5	2.4	1	-1.4
2015	0	1.0	1	0
2016	0.7	1.8	2	+0.2
2017	2.7	3.6	0	-3.6

<b>2018</b>	2.5	3.3	2	-1.3
<b>2019</b>	1.8	2.6	2.5	-0.1
<b>2020</b>	0.9	1.5	2.5	+1.0
<b>2021</b>	2.6	4.1	1	-3.1
<b>2022</b>	9.1	11.6	2	-9.6
<b>2023</b>	7.3	9.7	5	-4.7
<b>2024</b>	2.3	3.3	£1,900 up to SO 5% for M grade	(Varies per grade) <u>+1.7 (M Grade)</u>
<b>CUMULATIVE TOTAL</b>				<b>-31.3%</b>

**Chart 2:** The following chart visualises the same data as table 1 above.

(As 2024 had varying percentage increases for SO and below, 5% has been used).



Between 2011 and 2024, our pay awards rarely came close to matching inflation. Over that time period, **the cumulative shortfall in the value of TMBC earnings was -31.3% - almost a third.** High inflation years, like 2022 when the difference was -9.6%, significantly exacerbate the pay gap.

This pay erosion is most felt by those who have previously reached the top of their grade, who will not receive any further pay increments.

### The current situation



As of December 2024, the latest inflation rates were:

CPI 2.6%, and RPI 3.6%.

Note: UNISON believes that the RPI is a more accurate reflection of the cost pressures faced by working people, because it also includes housing costs.

While inflation is currently lower than last year, it is expected to rise again shortly.

In our recent member survey, TMBC UNISON members highlighted **significant price increases** over the past year, particularly for mortgages, energy, childcare, groceries, and insurance premiums (especially car insurance).

For those re-mortgaging in 2024, mortgage interest payments were **projected to rise by an average of 22.9% (an average rise of £2,900 annually)** according to the Resolution Foundation, marking a substantial additional financial burden.

Average **monthly rental costs** have also **increased by 8.4% up to August 2024**.

Though the Bank of England reduced interest rates by 0.25% to 4.75% in November 2024, rates are expected to rise again above 5% in 2025, which will further affect mortgage rates and inevitably impact rental prices.

Furthermore, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by an average of 9.5% (for those on dual fuel plans), then announced that prices will rise again from 1st January 2025 by another 1.2%. It is predicted to increase again in Q2 of 2025 (source: [Price Cap Predictions and Changes - British Gas](#)).

According to the Coram 2023 Childcare Survey, **childcare costs have increased by 80%** between 2010 and 2023 - and fees look set to rise even further now, due to National Insurance increases. A [2024 survey](#), revealed that 59% of parents said that a rise in nursery fees would lead to one parent in their household having to reduce their working hours or leaving work altogether.

Data from Eurostat shows that **car insurance premiums have increased by 82%** in the UK over the past 3 years. Our members have given examples of their premiums doubling, even when shopping around.

### **Recruitment and Retention at TMBC**

In recent years, TMBC has faced significant challenges in recruiting for a number of vacant positions, particularly in Planning, Legal, Licensing and office cleaners. Certain roles are in high demand across both the public and private sectors, but with the private sector typically offering higher salaries, it has led to a loss of qualified and experienced professionals from the public sector.

Being close to London offers the opportunity to earn a higher salary (plus London Weighting) with only a short commute—or even whilst working from home. This is a compelling factor that further contributes to our recruitment issues.

**64%** of UNISON members who responded to our 2024 survey believe that **TMBC pays less than other local authorities** in the South East for similar roles.

To confirm this, we compared some recent local job adverts with equivalent roles at TMBC:

- Maidstone: Customer Services £24,673 - £26,476  
vs. TMBC £22,201-£24,051.
- Sevenoaks – Civil Enforcement Officer - £29,330 - £31,773  
vs. TMBC £24,495 - £27,159.
- Dover: Housing Officer £32,491 - £37,362  
  
vs. TMBC £27,882 - £33,297.
- Folkestone – Environmental Health Officer - £41,567 - £47,516  
vs. TMBC £40,587-£45,480.
- Sevenoaks – Food and Safety Team Leader - £51,157 - £53,256  
vs. TMBC £48,273 – £51,027.

In general, we found **TMBC's pay seems less competitive** than other Kent local authorities. If TMBC continues to fall behind, its ability to attract and retain qualified staff will be further damaged.

Whilst paying a Market Supplement and offering Golden Hello payments has helped to fill most of the Planning vacancies that TMBC faced last year, it has caused **significant dissatisfaction** among staff—particularly those within the Planning department who did not receive these payments, many of whom had been working exceptionally hard while covering vacancies; but also staff in other departments at similar grades, many of whom would also be difficult to replace.

Had salaries been more comparable from the start, the Market Supplement and Golden Hello would likely not have been necessary, and staff morale would not have been as negatively impacted.

### Workload

According to our UNISON survey, **92%** of respondents reported an **increase in their workload** over the past year.

Nearly half (**46%**) of respondents had **seriously considered leaving for better pay**, while 17% were looking to leave for a **less stressful workload**. One member shared,

*“The stress caused by my workload is having a negative effect on my health.”*

**48%** of respondents said their **mental health had been impacted by their work**, and **24%** reported that **financial concerns were a contributing factor**, too.

Two respondents highlighted that their **workload often extended beyond normal working hours**. They were unable to claim overtime pay—either due to their M-grade contract, or because there was no overtime budget—whilst the current workload made it difficult to take time off in lieu (TOIL). As a result, these members are, at times, **working without any compensation**.

### Agile

The introduction of the Agile computer system this year has placed considerable pressure on staff across multiple departments. Whilst some colleagues were seconded to focus on the setup and implementation of the new system, many staff have been forced to juggle their regular workload with additional responsibilities.

Despite the best efforts and dedication of our staff, the system is still not fully operational. More recent setbacks, particularly related to data transfer, have led to significant delays in the go-live date. This **ongoing pressure and lack of resolution is creating frustration and stress, which is taking its toll on staff well-being**.

As a result, the overall **morale among employees has taken a noticeable hit**. It would not be surprising if some employees have already left due to the added strain, or if others are seriously considering resigning, feeling that the ongoing challenges are no longer sustainable for their personal and professional well-being.

### The National Living Wage

The National Living Wage (NLW) represents the legal minimum wage an employer can pay. Following the Government’s recent budget, the NLW will increase from the current £11.44 to £12.21 per hour (for workers over 21) from April 2025. This rise of 77p per hour translates to an additional £28.49 per week or £1,481 annually.

While UNISON has limited data on the specific impact for TMBC, it appears that around 10 employees on scale 2 and part of scale 3 will benefit.

### **The Real Living Wage**

By contrast, the Real Living Wage (RLW) is independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation to ensure a "basic but acceptable" standard of living, reflecting the current cost of living. For the 2024-2025 year, the RLW is set at £12.60 per hour.

While the RLW is voluntary, 15,000 employers are already paying it, including several local authorities in the South of England, such as Crawley, Brighton and Hove, Reading, Oxford City, Winchester, and Milton Keynes. These employers report benefits such as higher productivity, lower turnover and absenteeism, and an enhanced public image.

Notably, companies like Amazon and Lidl are paying a minimum of £13.50 and £13.64 per hour in 2024.

When recruiting, TMBC faces competition from these employers.

UNISON believes **TMBC should set a positive example for other local employers** in the borough by adopting the RLW for its own staff.

Paying the current RLW rate of £12.60 would cost the Council an additional 39p per hour per employee, amounting to £14.43 per week or £750.36 annually. This would benefit approximately 45 employees on scales 2, 3, and a few on scale 4.

### **What is happening to pay Nationally?**

The new Labour Government has accepted the **Independent Public Sector Pay Review Body's recommendation for pay increases of up to 6%**, in recognition of the years of austerity and real-terms wage cuts that have made it challenging to recruit and retain staff within the public sector.

The most recent Government budget has allocated 5% for public sector pay for the year ahead, although some sectors have secured higher pay settlements over the last year, including:

- NHS, teachers, and armed forces: 5.5-6%
- Civil servants: 5%
- Doctors and dentists: 6%
- Junior Doctors: 22%.

UNISON's national data as of September 2024 indicates that the **average annual pay settlement across the public sector is currently 5.7%**.

### **The local situation**

TMBC's recent financial reports show that the fiscal situation at this time is not as bad as it has been in previous years, or quite so dire as some other local authorities. UNISON members have played a key role in this improvement.

UNISON's 2024 Member Survey revealed that **29% of members** have faced financial difficulties over the past year, with **17% struggling to even pay utility bills**. Additionally, **42% of respondents have made lifestyle adjustments** to cope, such as cancelling gym memberships, socialising less, shopping at cheaper supermarkets, delaying haircuts and purchasing second-hand clothing.

**Summary:**

To boost staff morale, and improve recruitment and retention, UNISON is calling for:

- A pay rise for all salary points and allowances of **6%**, **OR a flat rate of £2,400** (equivalent to 6% for those on grade SO, but worth more for those on lower grades), **whichever is the higher**.
- An additional increase for those on the bottom of the pay scale to bring their pay up to at least the **Real Living Wage** as our minimum starting salary – not just the National Living Wage.

*Submitted by TMBC UNISON branch for and on behalf of our members.*

**Carolyn Mell**  
Branch Chair

**Jack Lee**  
Membership Officer

**31 December 2024**

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## General Purposes Committee

22 January 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Delegated



Cabinet Member

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer

Adrian Stanfield, Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Report Author

Mathew Brooks, Head of HR & Development

### Adoption of the 'Menopause in the Workplace Policy'

#### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The aim of implementing a new Menopause in the Workplace policy is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to advocating menopause awareness within the workplace.

#### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 The implementation of a workplace policy on the menopause will help ensure that women are not disadvantaged in the workplace. The aim of the new policy is to ensure that the Council continues to provide a supportive and inclusive working environment for all.

#### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the proposed new policy.
- 3.2 Members are asked to recommend the new policy for implementation.

#### 4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 A draft Menopause in the Workplace policy (Annex 1) has been developed by Human Resources in liaison with members of the Corporate Safety and Wellbeing Officer Steering Group.

## **5 Proposal**

- 5.1 By adopting a specific policy around Menopause in the Workplace, the policy will provide advice and guidance to those both directly and indirectly affected by the menopause, allowing those experiencing symptoms of the menopause to continue to be effective in their job roles.
- 5.2 The policy also aims to improve line manager's awareness of how menopause can affect employees and help managers to understand how they can support those experiencing menopausal symptoms at work.
- 5.3 The policy also sets out practical information and guidance on self-help measures and signposts staff to seeking further advice on managing and understanding the menopause.

## **6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 6.1 There is no financial risk associated with the implementation of this policy.

## **7 Risk Assessment**

- 7.1 The risk posed by the implementation of this policy is judged to be minimal.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The Council has ensured that the recommendations outlined in this report are legally compliant and have been undertaken in accordance with recognised best practice thus continuing to foster the Council's constructive approach to employee relations with its workforce.

## **9 Consultation and Communications**

- 9.1 The policy has been drafted in liaison with members of the Corporate Safety and Wellbeing Officer Steering Group.
- 9.2 The policy has been shared with and has the approval of the Council's Management Team.
- 9.3 The policy has been shared and presented to the Council's Joint Employee Consultative Committee and with UNISON.

## **10 Implementation**

- 10.1 The Council will adopt and implement the new policy once approved.



## 11 Cross Cutting Issues

### 11.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

11.1.1 A moderate source of emissions is likely to be maintained at current levels or increased.

11.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

11.2 This proposal does not negatively impact on climate change and/or biodiversity issues.

### 11.3 Equalities and Diversity

11.3.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

11.3.2 The Equality Act 2010 protects employees from discrimination based on protected characteristics, including age, sex, disability, and gender reassignment. While menopause is not a specific protected characteristic, unfavourable treatment related to menopause symptoms could be considered discrimination if it's based on one of these characteristics.

11.4 If menopause symptoms have a substantial and long-term impact on an employee's ability to work, they may be considered a disability. In this case, the employer must make reasonable adjustments and not discriminate against the employee.

### 11.5 Other If Relevant

- Human Resources
- Business Continuity / Resilience
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Lifestyles

11.5.1 The proposed policy is a new Human Resources policy.

11.5.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that staff affected by issues related to the menopause can be openly discussed and reasonable adjustments can be made to the working environment.

11.5.3 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974: Requires employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. This includes assessing workplace risks and taking action to remove or control them. The aim of the new policy is to improve awareness of the Menopause and to have a positive impact on the welfare of staff.

11.5.4 The policy promotes a number of different initiatives related to Health and Wellbeing and Healthy Lifestyles.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 Draft Menopause in the Workplace Policy

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# Menopause in the Workplace Policy

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# Contents

- 01 Introduction
- 02 Aims and objectives
- 03 Definition
- 04 Symptoms
- 05 Support in the Workplace
- 06 Guidance for Managers
- 07 Risk Assessment
- 08 Menopause and other Policies
- 09 Self-Help Measures
- 10 Signposting and Support

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of our commitment to advocate menopause within the workplace, we are seeking to provide a supportive and inclusive working environment for all.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that employees experiencing the menopause, whether before, during or after this time of hormonal change and associated symptoms, may need additional consideration, support and adjustments. The menopause can have an impact on any individual's physical and mental health.
- 1.3 The Council aims to ensure everyone understands what the menopause is and enable staff to instigate and foster positive conversations with colleagues and managers in a comfortable and open environment.
- 1.4 This policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all the workforce.

# 2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide advice and guidance to those both directly and indirectly affected by the menopause allowing those experiencing symptoms of the menopause to continue to be effective in their jobs.
- 2.2 To improve line manager's awareness of how menopause can affect employees and help managers to understand how they can support those experiencing menopausal symptoms at work.
- 2.3 The Council is seeking to raise awareness and understanding among all employees about menopause.

# 3. Definitions

- 3.1 What is the menopause? The menopause is a natural phase of life when individuals stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically last for a number of years which is why it is best described as a transition rather than a one-off event.
- 3.2 Every experience will be different and menopausal symptoms can begin before the age of 40, this can be caused by premature menopause or surgery.
- 3.3 Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins before the menopause.
- 3.4 Perimenopause is the phase leading up to the menopause when an individual's hormone balance starts to change, and when they may begin to experience menopausal symptoms. For some, this can start as early as their twenties or as late as their forties.

# 4. Symptoms

- 4.1 Symptoms of menopause can manifest both physically and psychologically and can be different for everyone; and for a quarter of individuals, they are severely debilitating.

- 4.2 Symptoms can have a huge effect on an individual's comfort and performance when working.
- 4.3 Symptoms vary greatly, and commonly include (but aren't limited to):
- hot flushes
  - palpitations
  - night sweats
  - insomnia and sleep disturbances
  - dizziness
  - fatigue
  - headaches
  - recurrent urinary tract infections
  - joint stiffness, aches and pains
  - irregular or heavy, painful periods
  - dry skin, eyes and hair loss
- 4.4 There may also be associated psychological symptoms including:
- depression
  - anxiety and panic attacks
  - reduced concentration
  - changes to mood
  - memory loss
  - loss of confidence
- 4.4 Individuals may experience only some or all of these symptoms (as well as some other less common symptoms which are not listed). Most will experience some symptoms, whilst others may not experience any noticeable symptoms.
- 4.5 On average, individuals continue to experience symptoms for four years after their last period, but around 10% continue to experience symptoms up to 12 years after their last period.
- 4.6 Beyond the menopause, due to lower levels of certain hormones, post-menopausal individuals can be at an increased risk of certain conditions such as developing osteoporosis ('brittle bones') and heart disease. These risks increase for those who have an early or premature menopause.
- 4.7 Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly.
- 4.8 Some individuals seek medical advice and treatment for the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause. A common form of treatment is known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- 4.9 Many find these treatments helpful for alleviating symptoms, but HRT may not be suitable or appropriate for all.
- 4.10 Some individuals taking HRT may experience side effects which may also require adjustments in the workplace.

## 5. Support in the workplace

- 5.1 It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience, and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals.
- 5.2 Individuals are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are recognised as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health.
- 5.3 Early notification will also help line managers to work with the individual in assessing the most appropriate support to meet their needs.
- 5.4 Although all line managers are expected to take a positive and supportive approach towards discussions about the menopause, the Council understands that some individual staff members who are affected may feel uncomfortable talking directly to their line manager if they are experiencing problems, particularly if the line manager is male or much younger than they are (although these are broad assumptions and will not necessarily be the case).
- 5.5 The Council understands this and those who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may wish to have a discussion with:
  - a colleague
  - contact the Employee Assistant Programme provider
  - member of the HR Team
  - UNISON representative
  - Attend the Menopause Café
- 5.6 The Council also recognises that some staff may be indirectly impacted by someone they know experiencing issues related to the menopause. One example of this could be a staff member may have a partner or close family member who is experiencing severe menopausal symptoms and may require additional support.
- 5.7 Employee Assistance Programme – Health Assured. Individuals can access confidential support through our EAP via the online chat service and a wealth of tips, support and information via the app.
- 5.8 Further information on accessing support via Health Assured can be found on Staff Net: [Employee Wellbeing and Support \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- 5.9 Menopause Café is a bi-monthly informal support group established to provide an inclusive forum for individuals to share ideas, discuss concerns and provide a safe space for open and comfortable conversations. Further information can be found on Staff Net.
- 5.10 For individuals who may require additional support in the workplace, following a discussion with their line manager and HR, it may be appropriate to refer them to Occupational Health.

## 6. Guidance for Managers

- 6.1 The Council encourages all managers to take responsibility to familiarise themselves with the menopause policy and guidance and be ready and willing to have an open discussion about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- 6.2 Line managers are not expected to be experts or act as healthcare professionals when discussing the

menopause.

- 6.3 Line managers should always advise employees to consult their GP for further support and be aware that further advice can also be sought from Occupational Health if their symptoms are impacting on them at work.
- 6.4 When an employee tells their line manager about their issues with menopause, the manager should seek to gain an understanding of what support the employee is likely to need in the workplace.
- 6.5 Line managers should be mindful that everyone has the right to feel respected and valued at work, and be confident in raising issues when they need to and remember that every individual's issues are unique to them, do not make assumptions.
- 6.7 Ensure that all information shared by the employee is treated in confidence and is not shared further without the employee's consent.
- 6.8 Listen to and gain an understanding of any concerns your employee has about their issues or symptoms, avoiding assumptions.
- 6.9 Discuss timescales and leave requirements if this has been raised as part of the discussion. It is worth noting that perimenopause and menopause symptoms do not have an indicative timeline for resolution.
- 6.10 Take account of both individual and business needs when dealing with requests for all types of leave, being mindful of the importance of being supportive of attendance at appointments.
- 6.11 Outline the support available to the employee, such as adjustments in the workplace, Employee Assistance Programme and consideration for an Occupational Health referral where appropriate.

## 7. Risk Assessments

- 7.1 Line managers should ensure risk assessments consider the specific requirements of the impacts of menopause and ensure that the working environment is suitable and will not exacerbate symptoms further.
- 7.2 The risk assessment will assist with identification of any potential adjustments which may be required.
- 7.3 Managers should use the risk assessment template [as found on staffnet] as a guide, but also take into account any additional issues raised by the individual affected.
- 7.4 Common physical issues that should be considered are workplace temperatures and ventilation, the addition of a desk fan, access to adequate toilet and washing facilities availability of somewhere suitable for rest breaks.

## 8. Menopause and Other Policies

- 8.1 The Council recognises that the effects of menopause should be taken into account when considering the implementation of other policies such as sickness absence, capability and performance, complaints and flexible working arrangements to ensure that individuals experiencing these symptoms are not unfairly treated or discriminated against.
- 8.2 Sickness absence related to menopause will be handled sensitively in line with the sickness absence



policy whilst trying to prevent action under the policy by improving or removing factors that may make it more difficult to manage symptoms of menopause while at work.

- 8.3 An Occupational Health referral may be useful in identifying reasonable adjustments that may support an employee to maintain their attendance at work.
- 8.4 Flexible working arrangements – the Council’s flexible working and time off policy may support an employee to manage the symptoms of menopause while at work. All employees have the right to request flexible working arrangements from day one of their employment.
- 8.5 Changes to working time arrangements should be considered where appropriate and in-line with the needs of the service, including adjustments to start/finish times, flexible working requests for reduced hours, home working and increasing the working day to allow additional breaks to support the individual in managing menopause symptoms.
- 8.7 Following any recommendations from occupational health, consideration should be given to whether any adjustment to the employee’s duties would support them to manage symptoms of menopause while at work.
- 8.8 Managers should work with employees and Human Resources to determine the right support for each individual.

## 9. Self-help Measures

- 9.1 Employees experiencing symptoms of menopause are advised to seek advice and support and are encouraged to consider:
  - seeking medical advice from your GP on the management of menopause symptoms
  - discussing symptoms with your line manager and requesting appropriate workplace adjustments
  - contacting the employee assistance programme
- 9.2 Current health promotion advice highlights the importance of lifestyle choices before, during and after the menopause and the benefits of:
  - having access to natural light
  - getting adequate rest and relaxation
  - wearing natural fibres
  - eating healthily and regularly – research has shown that a balanced diet can help alleviate some symptoms and help keep bones healthy
  - drinking plenty of water
  - exercising regularly – exercise can help to reduce hot flushes and improve sleep. It can also help to boost mood and maintain strong bones
  - not smoking
  - being aware of your caffeine and alcohol intake
  - staying cool at night by wearing loose clothes in a well-ventilated room
- 9.3 These measures can help with some symptoms of menopause and may also help reduce the risk of osteoporosis (brittle bones), diabetes and heart disease in later life.

## 10. Self-help Measures and advice

- 10.1 The Council's **Employee Assistance Programme** includes a 24/7 helpline designed to support you through any of life's issues or problems. Your call will be handled by an experienced therapist or advisor, who will offer support in a friendly manner.

You can 'freephone' 24/7 on 0800 028 0199 or visit <https://wisdom.healthassured.org/login> using our organisation code which is **MHA001610**

- 10.2 Recordings of the menopause awareness sessions held for staff can be found here under the section Menopause and Work:

[Employee Wellbeing and Support \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- 10.3 All staff and manager's are encouraged to undertake this short e-learning course on the Council's e-learning system: [Menopause in the Workplace](#)

- 10.4 **External Links**

[Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice](#)

[British Menopause Society | For healthcare professionals and others specialising in post reproductive health \(thebms.org.uk\)](#)

[Menopause - Symptoms - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Hormone replacement therapy \(HRT\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Overview | Menopause: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)

[Home - The Menopause Exchange \(menopause-exchange.co.uk\)](#)

[menopausesupport.co.uk – Supporting You Through Change](#)

[Charity for Women with POI | The Daisy Network](#)

Human Resources  
January 2025

# Agenda Item 9

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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# Agenda Item 10

The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

**ANY REPORTS APPEARING AFTER THIS PAGE CONTAIN EXEMPT  
INFORMATION**

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# Agenda Item 12

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent due to special circumstances and of which notice has been given to the Chief Executive.

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