

FOR PUBLICATION

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Item 7
11 JULY 2023**

SUBJECT: NATIONAL PAY AWARD FOR BRIGADE MANAGERS OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

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Background Papers: NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services – Constitution & Scheme of Conditions of Service (5th Edition) – The ‘Gold Book’

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	31 May 2023 NJC Circular for BM Pay Award 2022-2023	
2	4 Mar 2023 - NJC BM Pay revised offer letter	

Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report. Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	Yes	<p>The financial implications across the two years (2022 & 2023) are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Option 1 pay cost £38,909, total cost including salary overheads £54,941.• Option 2 pay cost £62,895, total cost including salary overheads £88,830 (an additional budget pressure over the two-year period above the 5% budgeted for both 2022 & 2023 of £13,292 for pay and £18,756 incl oncosts) <p>The revenue budget can accommodate both options as the pay awards assumption was that the pay awards would be applied equally to all levels of the uniformed staff including the Principal Officers.</p>

Risk Management	No	
Legal Implications	No	
Privacy and Security Implications	No	
Duty to Collaborate	No	
Health and Safety Implications	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	No	

PURPOSE:

This paper updates Members on the final pay award agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services for the 2022 and 2023 pay years which will affect the remuneration paid to the four members of the Principal Officer team (Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and the Assistant Chief Officer) as the 'Gold Book' employees of Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Authority is recommended to comment on the report and approve their preferred option to be applied to the remuneration of the Principal Officer team for both the 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2023 pay periods.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. This Authority employs its staff under three National Joint Council (NJC) Scheme of Conditions of Service:

- Green Book (NJC for Local Government Services) – corporate/support staff roles
- Grey Book (NJC for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services) – operational staff roles - firefighter to area manager
- Gold Book (NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services) – Principal Officer team

1.2. This Authority budgeted for a 5% pay award for Grey and Gold book staff for both 2022/23 and 2023/24. Green book staff were budgeted for 2022 at a fixed amount as detailed in para 1.3 below.

Green Book Pay Awards 2022 & 2023

1.3. For the 2022 pay year, the NJC for Green Book staff agreed a pay award, which is summarised as set out below:

- *with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above*
- *with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2021 NJC pay agreement circular dated 28 February 2022)*
- *with effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement*

1.4. For the current pay year (2023), the employee side of the NJC have rejected the latest offer from the National Employers for the current year (2023/24), a summary of which is set out below:

- *An increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive*
- *An increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.41)*
- *An increase of 3.88 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2022 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2022)*

Grey Book Pay Awards 2022 and 2023

1.5. In early 2023, the NJC for Grey Book staff agreed a two-year national pay award for operational staff roles (firefighter to area manager) covering wholetime, on-call and control staff which is summarised below:

- *An increase of 7% for the 2022 pay year with continuous professional development payments also increased by 7%*
- *An increase of 5% for the 2023 pay year with continuous professional development payments also increased by 5%*

Gold Book Pay Awards 2022 and 2023

1.6. The Gold Book pay offer affects only the four most senior officers in the service and, due to protracted negotiations, apply retrospectively to the years from 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2023 respectively.

1.7. In early March 2023 (Appendix 2) a revised pay offer from the Employers reminded FRAs of the twin track approach set out in the Salaries section of the NJC for Brigade Managers 'Gold Book' scheme of conditions of service which applies to the Principal Officers employed by this Authority, which is set out below for Members reference:

Salaries

9. The NJC will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to chief fire officers/chief executives employed by local authority fire and rescue authorities.

10. There is a two-track approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Manager roles. At national level, the NJC shall review annually the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by this agreement. In doing so, the NJC will consider affordability, other relevant pay deals and the rate of inflation at the appropriate date. Any increase agreed by the NJC will be communicated to fire authorities by circular.

11. All other decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Brigade Manager roles will be taken by the local Fire and Rescue Authority, who will annually review these salary levels.

12. Advice on implementation of a local salary structure is contained in guidance at Appendix A [of the Gold Book].

1.8. This Authority has not undertaken an annual local pay review in compliance with the twin-track approach set out in the Gold Book for at least five years.

1.9. The revised national pay award offer made by the national employers in March 2023 (Appendix 2) was:

- *an increase of 4% from 1 January 2022 but that any increase was capped at £5,000 and*
- *an increase of 3.5% from 1 January 2023 but that any increase was capped at £4,000.*

1.10. Following further negotiations, the NJC announced on 31 May 2023 (Appendix 1) it had reached agreement on a national award of:

- *an increase of 4% from 1 January 2022, and;*
- *an increase of 3.5% from 1 January 2023.*

2. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

2.1. There are 3 suggested options for members to consider in this report:

OPTION 1 - The Authority adopts the NJC BM Pay Award for 2022 and 2023 as set out in paragraph 1.10 of this report and commissions a local pay review as per the twin-track approach set out in the Gold Book. The financial impact of this option would be a combined pay uplift cost for the Principal Officer team of £38,909 over the two years. Total pay uplift cost including salary overheads £54,941. The outcomes of the local pay review would need to be considered once known.

OPTION 2 – The Authority considers awarding its Gold Book employees the same pay award as their Grey book (firefighter) counterparts, namely an increase of 7% from 1 January 2022 and then an increase of 5% from 1 January 2023. This would provide equity with the pay award for all the different levels of firefighter staffing throughout the fire service structure and thereby maintain the pay differentials between the Area Managers and the Principal Officers to reflect their special roles and responsibilities. The financial impact of this option would be an additional combined pay uplift for the Principal Officer team over the two years of £62,895. Including salary overheads gives a total of £88,830. This represents an additional budget pressure over the two-year period above the 5% budgeted for both 2022 & 2023 of £13,292 for pay and £18,756 incl oncosts). This would negate the need to undertake an annual local pay review for this current year, therefore negating part 2 of option 1 above.

OPTION 3 – The Authority considers contractually linking pay awards for its Gold Book employees with that nationally awarded to its Grey Book employees. At least three other Authorities have implemented this option. That is, to award Gold Book employees the same nationally agreed pay award as awarded to Grey Book employees. This would require the Authority to negotiate a contractual change to the terms and conditions of its Principal Officer team.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Authority is recommended to comment on the report and approve their preferred option to be applied to the remuneration of the service's Gold book staff for both the 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2023 pay periods.

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