

**Mr A Ritchie
General Secretary
UCATT
177 Abbeville Road
London
SW4 9RL**

20 May 2010

Dear Alan,

JNC Trade Union Side 2010 Pay & Conditions Claim

Thank you for your Side's pay claim for 2010/11.

Your claim refers to the Employers' statement on 20 January confirming that they were unable to make any pay offer to local government employees, including Craftworkers, for 2010/11. The Employers have nonetheless considered your claim but have concluded that the financial position in local government remains such that any increase would simply not be affordable. Accordingly, the Employers are unable to offer any increase for 2010/11.

The Employers' response to each non-pay related element of your claim is as follows:

1. Common Craft Rate

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to agree to this element of your claim.

2. Guaranteed Minimum Bonus

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to agree to this element of your claim.

3. Consolidation of Building Labourer and Heating Ventilation Mate Grades

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to agree to this element of your claim.

4. Extra Payments and Allowances:

Car Allowances

As we have stated in previous years, two independent experts working to a long-established formula are employed to calculate the Car Allowance figures each year. The petrol element makes up just a small part of the overall allowance rates. Whilst the Employers would be willing to reconsider the current system of calculating the rates each year this could not happen in isolation and would need to be held

within the context of a wider review of travel policies applying across other employee groups.

5. Working Hours

The Employers reject your claim for a reduction in the working week. Such a reduction would be out of line with other groups of local government employees and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.

6. Holiday Entitlement

The Employers reject your claim for an increase in holiday entitlement. All Craft employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave, plus eight public holidays. This rises to 28 days after 5 years' service. Many authorities have superior local provision.

7. Bereavement Leave

All local authorities have locally-determined policies for all types of leave, including bereavement leave. All leave is subject to the discretion of the employer in order to take into account the organisation's needs.

The Employers do not believe that producing guidance, including a definition of 'immediate family', would assist local decision making.

8. Paternity Pay

The Employers believe that arrangements for paternity / maternity support leave should be consistent with other groups of local government employees. Since this is already the case, the Employers reject this element of your claim.

9. Sick Pay

The Employers believe that arrangements for sick pay should be consistent with other groups of local government employees. Since this is already the case, the Employers reject this element of your claim.

10. Agency Labour

Councils have been given a clear signal that under future spending plans they will need to achieve considerable efficiency gains. In some cases, this will mean looking very carefully at whether the use of agency staff provides value for money. Councils are being encouraged to reduce their dependence on agency staff as much as possible.

11. Stand By Allowances

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to offer any increase in Stand By Allowances.

12. Storage of Tools and Clothing

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to offer any increase in the rates for Storage of Tools and Clothing.

13. London and Fringe Area Allowances

The Employers have concluded that as they are unable to make any offer on pay, for the reasons set out above, they are unable to offer any increase in London and Fringe Area Allowances.

14. Apprentices

The LGA has agreed that 7,500 is a realistic figure for an increased number of apprentices throughout local government in England and is working hard to encourage local authorities to maximise their engagement with Apprenticeships, either as a direct employer, purchaser of services or commissioner of 14-19 services. The IDeA is providing support and advice to help councils think about how they can increase their own apprentice numbers. The real effort has to be at a local level, however, and councils are being encouraged to think about how they can maximise opportunities by providing places across a broad range of occupations. These are local choices and the Employers cannot simply instruct councils on which areas they should focus on as that will depend on local circumstances.

15. Additions to Section 4.4 of the National Agreement

Local authorities take their responsibility for health and safety extremely seriously and are fully aware of their legal responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act and any subsequent regulation. Much of your proposed wording is already underpinned by a legal imperative. Each local authority will have specific locally agreed policies to deal with all of these issues and these will cover all employees regardless of the national collective bargaining machinery that determines their terms and conditions.

Local government is continuing to work closely with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as the regulator to monitor the performance across authorities in England and Wales. Local government is also working with HSE at a strategic level to identify priorities and issues that can effectively contribute to the implementation of the new 'Health & Safety Strategy for Great Britain'.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Messenger
Employers' Secretary

cc Mr J Allott, Unite
Mr B Blackman, Unite
Mr B Strutton, GMB