

TRADE UNIONS CALL TIME!

Pay Framework Scrapped

Following publication of our last newsletter and high level discussions with Management, Rochdale MBC has decided to scrap its new pay framework. While this is being described as fine-tuning the reality is that it was not fit for purpose. Behind the scenes Rochdale officials are busy phoning their counterparts in other councils asking for details of what they have done!! You couldn't make it up.

At a meeting with senior officers on 30 September the joint trade unions gave Rochdale management a clear choice: adopt the Bolton model or go the Bury route.

Better in Bolton

In Bolton Management and trade union negotiators have jointly modelled a new structure with open access to all information including job evaluation scores for all posts. Unions have fully understood the impact on members and have been able to properly influence the outcome. A pay framework was devised jointly with additional funds being made available. While there are still losers as well as winners losers have been held down to the minimum possible. Everyone else either stays the same or gains. Pay protection is substantially better than Rochdale's proposals.

Bad in Bury

In Bury the structure was devised behind closed doors and presented as a fait accompli to unions. Detailed information on who scored what and who would win and lose has yet to be provided. 30% of staff are set to lose out. With limited pay protection the effect on many members' families will be devastating. Watching the chaos unfold in Bury has helped to focus management minds in Rochdale...or has it?

Nothing to say

At our latest meeting management told us that they were planning to run road shows. We knew that. In essence they have nothing new to tell anyone other than they have scrapped a poor piece of work and are starting again. No details were given.

What the unions are promised is that they will be able "to look" at the detail once it has been modelled and agreed by the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors. In other words we are being invited to hop on the same old merry-go-round. As one union official said, "They think we're chickens and they're just feeding us scraps".



Where to now?

Members will be concerned that not taking part will leave members unprotected. Being out of the process will be no different to being in. The last seven months have effectively **excluded the unions**. The unions have simply formalised the reality. UNISON will now begin a concerted campaign with members to protect the position of all members. We urge all members to attend the Management road shows. Overleaf are some questions you may wish to ask.

Sorry...we thought a main aim of the exercise was to introduce Equal Pay!

Here are some questions that you may wish to ask at the Management meetings

No Management Losers?

At the one meeting where trade unions were permitted a look at the details it became clear that above 600 points not a single person lost a penny. In other words the 38% of losers were concentrated amongst the rest of the staff. Is that still your plan?

Same Old Low Pay

While other Councils have taken the opportunity of removing the lowest scale point (SCP4) and in some cases have removed the lowest two scale points Rochdale had no proposals for resolving low pay. Why not?

Equality

You have not given the trade unions any details. You said that the LINK software couldn't handle gender data. How can we be assured that your new pay framework is equality proofed?

Funding

How much extra money is Rochdale prepared to put in ?

Privatisation

Can you assure us that in those services where there are large numbers of winners you will not simply privatise the service?

Will I Get Back Pay?

Members who can demonstrate that they have an underlying claim for equal pay have a legal right to claim back pay for up to six years. The Council have stated that they will not pay any back pay and UNISON will now take the necessary action to assert our members' legal rights. We are ready and willing to lodge equal pay claims. If you think you have an equal pay claim contact the Branch Office.

Why so wrong?

Given that the trade unions have been urging you to work jointly in partnership since February to what extent has managements decision to keep them in the dark contributed to a pay model that was not fit for purpose?

When will we know?

When are you going to tell us what our points scores are; when will we know what our pay is going to be?

Pay protection?

Will Rochdale guarantee to match the best pay protection on offer elsewhere?

Terms and conditions

Are you still planning to slash terms and conditions including paying overtime at plain time rates including all Bank Holidays, and all enhancements including unsocial hours payments for weekends and nights?

What Can You Do?

UNISON is clear that all members face a difficult few months. The Branch Committee will continue to organise to protect your interests. Unity is strength and more members will give us more strength. Please recruit non-members in your workplace. We need more stewards. Full training is available and paid time off will be provided.

Management has already told us that they are prepared to impose an unacceptable pay framework at the same time as slashing terms and conditions. Action in other Councils has been successful. Action in Rochdale can force a re-think. Join the campaign and join the action.

