

Chiefs request 2% pay rise

2 JANUARY, 2018 | BY JON BUNN



COMMENT



The union representing council chief executives and senior managers has submitted a pay claim that matches the 2% pay offer made to general council staff last month.

Association of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers (Alace) chair Tracey Lee said the increase was necessary due to "increasing pressures" on senior managers caused by austerity and Brexit.

Last month, the National Employers made an [offer of 2% for each of the next two years for the majority of council staff](#) but that does not apply to the most senior council staff.

Ms Lee said: "Given this context, Alace does not believe that chief executives should receive less generous treatment than other local government staff."

The National Employers are expected to respond to Alace's claim, submitted on 21 December, early in February.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ms Lee said: "The pressures facing heads of paid service in leading their organisations through very challenging times continue unabated. Local government is widely accepted to be the most efficient part of the public sector. Leadership of the highest quality and resilience are demanded from chief executives in transforming councils, delivering public service reform and securing economic and housing growth."

Conservative councillors [attempted to block the 2% offer](#) for the majority of council staff last month, warning that the increase would lead to further cuts to services.

Pay claim will be criticised but best leaders are needed now more than ever

3 JANUARY, 2018 | BY JON BUNN



COMMENT  

LGC's commentary on the 2% pay claim by the chief executives' union

Post-Grenfell latest: [Warning of 'unprecedented' funding woes over sprinkler costs](#)

Resignation impact: [Lord Adonis's commission departure sparks infrastructure concerns](#)

Carolyn Wilkins: [Collaboration with communities improves health](#)

Yesterday the Association of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers [announced it had issued a pay claim](#) that matched the 2% offer made last month by the National Employers to most council staff.

The claim by Alace, the union which represents the highest paid officers in local government, may have been a surprise to some, coming as it does at a time of ever tightening squeezes on service budgets – particularly those supporting the most vulnerable and often impoverished sections of society.

The claim will undoubtedly be met by strong criticism from some quarters. Pre-empting a potential backlash, Alace chair Tracey Lee said the increasing pressures on chiefs and senior managers caused by ongoing austerity and impending Brexit meant they deserved the same offer as other local government staff.

MOST POPULAR

MOST COMMENTED



Leading social care figures and chiefs receive New Year's honours



Chiefs request 2% pay rise



Tameside leader dies after suffering heart attack



People news: London chief to be replaced by borough's director



Warning of 'unprecedented' funding woes over sprinkler costs



Adonis's commission departure sparks infrastructure concerns



Stella Manzie: 'Birmingham is not too big to be successful'



Carolyn Wilkins: Collaboration with communities improves health

In part, a degree of public disdain at this logic is to be expected. There is no doubt that austerity has, and will continue to have, a greater impact on members of society – including council staff – on lower incomes.

ADVERTISEMENT

The wages earned by Alace members likely afford them the long-term financial comfort many can only dream of and will safely buffer against the harshest consequences of economic and social instability.

But, as Alace argues, it is the current landscape of rising financial pressures and ongoing uncertainty that requires the most highly skilled leadership to navigate an ever-rougher terrain.

Without this councils, and the jobs, security and services they provide, become even more vulnerable; not only threatening the financial stability of local authorities themselves, but the very fabric of the communities they serve.

Councils' unique position within the public sector as providers of a multitude of services directly to communities, with households billed for a significant contribution to overall running costs through council tax, places their spending under particularly intense scrutiny – and rightly so.

There may be some chief executives and senior managers who are paid too much.

To maintain local government resilience, ensure the level of talent required to lead in difficult times is maintained and guarantee true value for the taxpayer, pay for senior staff would ideally be set as close as possible to a level that is not too low to deter strong senior officers from taking on increasingly demanding and complex challenges but not higher than necessary to secure the right people.

But [research by LGC](#) in September last year showed that average salaries for newly appointed chief executives are continuing to decline, with just a quarter of those taking on a new role in the previous 12 months earning more than their predecessors.

A rise of 2% for the most senior council officers at a time when leading in local government has arguably never been harder – and therefore strong leadership is required more than ever – perhaps appears relatively modest.

Jon Bunn, senior reporter