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If calling ask for:

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Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Important message from your Branch Committee on the Local Government Pay Proposals 2014/16 and the consultative ballot

21st October 2014

Dear member

UNISON West Sussex urges you to REJECT the new pay proposals

Negotiations have been underway for several months to achieve a far pay award for you and your family for 2014/15. The national employers' side offered 1% for the year, and then refused to talk further to the trade unions, or allows ACAS to arbitrate. However, a set of proposals have now come forward from the employers. Please take the time to study them.

UNISON is a democratic union, and as such it is only right that you – the union's membership – now have your say about the national employers' new proposals. You are in the driving seat, as it is your decisions and your vote on these matters that instructs our trade union on how to go forward.

The union's original pay claim was for at least £1 an hour on all pay points, so as to achieve the Living Wage for those on the lowest NJC pay point.

The Executive Committee of the Branch met on 14th October and voted unanimously by 9 votes to 0 to recommend that members REJECT the proposals. We make these following points for your consideration:

1. The employers' latest proposals fall **too far** below the aspirations in our 2014/15 claim to be accepted;
2. They are not **what you deserve**, working as hard as you do in the most difficult of circumstances as local government cuts hit both services and staff;
3. The proposals turn a bad one-year offer into **a bad two-year offer**. The offer would last until March 2016, and remove the opportunity for a pay claim in 2015/16 – a general election year;
4. There would be **no back-pay** for the period April-December 2014. This instead is replaced with a 'non-consolidated' cash sum of £100 for all staff working at or above spinal column point 11 – where Grade 3 begins. 'Non-consolidated' means this would be a **one-off payment** and would not become a part of your base salary for future years;

5. The award is worth 2.2% across the two years, an improvement of **0.1%** per annum if you assume the employers would have offered 1% in 2015/16;
6. The 'cash sum to pay in Apr 2015' for staff working at or above Grade 7 spinal point 26 has been inserted, again as a one-off non-consolidated payment, to ensure that staff do not receive **less than the original 1%** the employer offered for 2014/15;
7. The proposal does nothing to address the decline in our earnings – your pay packet will still have been cut by 20% since 2010;

The position of the Branch Committee is we should REJECT these proposals. If you vote to reject the proposals, **we need you** to take industrial action to make the employers think again and make a better offer.

In so doing the Branch will continue to fully support its striking members, and will continue to support its members through its industrial action hardship fund. We paid out on all 125 requests after July 10's action.

If members do vote to reject the proposals, we must be clear that there are no plans for sustained action as yet. Further industrial action would need to be approved by the UNISON NJC Committee, which is meeting again on the 14th November. This could take the form it has previously, though would in all probability need to be escalated and could include consideration of other forms of industrial action such as working to rule.

The Branch is organising a series of meetings for its members to help explain what is a highly complex offer, and answer any questions you may have. Please do your best to attend one and encourage your colleagues to do so. As well as the meetings advertised in the enclosed poster, we will hold additional meetings across the County on request.

Please have your say, and use your vote in this consultative ballot.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Sartin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dan Sartin
Branch Secretary