

Our ref: PD/LS

13<sup>th</sup> February 2013

To: GMB members in Sheffield City Council

Dear Colleague

### **The Increment Freeze**

If you are entitled to increments and have not signed the letter the Council sent, you will have been invited to attend a meeting with your line management. This letter, in my opinion and based on legal advice from our solicitors, is only an offer to meet and not an instruction to attend this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is an attempt by the Council to persuade you to agree to vary your contract on a voluntary basis and to remove your right to receive increments for another year.

The Council have claimed that the trade unions have not come up with any reasonable alternatives to their proposal but they are, to be blunt, misleading you. I have asked them on several occasions to show me their total costs for agency staff and to show me why they could not find their projected £5million savings from that budget, or even a proportion of the savings. As you are aware I have shared the information that they sent to me. They have now changed their minds and come up with another set of figures but this time they have not included their entire spend on all agencies and consultants. Even at that, the budget comes in at £6.5million and shows a 20% increase on last year.

The GMB cannot and will not accept that a Council should opt for further pay cuts and job losses when they are simply replacing those staff, to a large extent, with temporary agency workers and consultants.

Please accept my apologies for the timing of this, our latest advice, I would have preferred to send it sooner, but the letters they have sent to you this week have not been shared with the trade unions in advance.

The letter says that they will serve you notice of termination, it does not go on to say that they will also offer reengagement on the new terms. It therefore follows that the Council is trying to scare you into signing the voluntary change of contract.

The GMB deplores these kinds of tactics and gives the following advice:

Not signing the voluntary change of contract does not affect your pension or length of service but we will offer further advice when you receive the letter of termination/reengagement.

**You are strongly advised to politely decline the invitation to these meetings with the following words:**

“Thank you for your correspondence inviting me to a meeting to discuss the SCC increment freeze. I am currently taking advice from my trade union and therefore do not feel it necessary to take up the offer of a meeting at this stage.”

If you receive undue pressure from your manager it is imperative that you immediately contact your trade union for advice. If your manager tells you that the meeting request is an instruction, not an invitation, then please ask for that in writing and, again, contact the union.

If you do attend the meeting insist on having a GMB rep with you and if there is no one available then please insist that the meeting is rearranged.

**Do not sign anything at this meeting.**

If you have any questions contact your convenor mobile numbers below or the GMB Sheffield office: 01142768017 for advice.

**Convenors:**

Lead convenor: John Stevenson: 07899791420

Deputy Chief Executive/ Recourse: Dave Kitchen: 07802497824

Communities: Shelagh Carter: 07805805198

Education: Maria Hill: 07805750829

Place: Martyn Wragg: 07792489927

Yours sincerely

***Peter Davies***

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Organiser

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