
NEWS RELEASE



20th September 2023

Possible industrial action for district council staff

Huntingdonshire District Council is preparing for planned industrial action. This is for all UNISON members employed by the council.

Late yesterday afternoon HDC were informed that members of the UNISON union intend to take strike action on Friday 6th October in relation to a pay dispute relating to the pay award for 2023/24. If the issue is not resolved, they then intend to pursue a period of industrial action in the form of an ongoing period of work to rule from Monday 9th October.

Talks between the council, its Employee Representation Group (ERG – who represent all Council staff) and UNISON had made progress since previous threat of strike action, and three new pay options were put forward linked to higher than anticipated interest payments on bank balances. The council proposed three options to ERG and UNISON in response to UNISON members raising a dispute regarding this year's pay award. These offers were subject to engagement and feedback from all staff members. We received confirmation from UNISON that members have voted in favour of accepting one of the pay award options put forward. While they have expressed their preference for which option, they want implemented, the terms of the offer always included gaining the views of all staff on their preferred pay award. This process is underway and being led by an independent organisation.

In line with these timeframes, we have further talks scheduled with UNISON on Wednesday 4th October, to discuss the results of the all-staff ballot and to seek a resolution to this year's

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pay dispute. Work will continue to resolve the dispute, and the session already in the diary offers the opportunity to do exactly that. However contingency planning is underway to seek to limit the impact of any industrial action on residents if the action goes ahead.

Once contingency arrangements are in place, the Huntingdonshire District Council website will be kept up to date with the latest information about any disruption to services.

Councillor Martin Hassall, Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services, said: "We have not refused to implement any pay agreement. In a pay award that affects all staff, Members have been clear that we must get the views of all employees.

"Following lengthy and transparent discussions with UNISON and our employee Representatives Group, where we openly discussed the financial situation of the council, a clear offer was made with the agreement that we would carry out a transparent process that would seek the views of all our staff on the pay offers that were put forward.

"The voluntary agreement with the council and UNISON, who represent an important but small element of our overall staff base, was agreed to in the spirit of constructive relations. It is therefore disappointing that UNISON have gone back on the agreement to seek the views of all staff and that they have signalled their intention to take this course of action.

"Talks are scheduled for the 4th of October, and we very much hope that industrial action can be avoided or resolved quickly."

"Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that we can maintain our frontline services as best we can on the days affected but some services will have to be prioritised at the expense of others and we would ask for the public's patience. If there are any changes to services, then we will communicate these via our website and social media."

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