

20 April 2020

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Side Secretary
NJC for Local Government Services
Local Government House
Smith Square
London, SW1P 3HZ

Dear Naomi,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April.

Like you, we also wish to begin discussions about issues that will become increasingly prominent from 2021 – these will include the National Living Wage but also consideration of the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on the local government workforce. However, first of all we must make sure we deliver a settlement for 2020 that delivers for the local government workforce.

While you state the offer should be considered final, there are clearly two outstanding issues:

1) Annual leave and working hours. The offer on annual leave relies on a curious interpretation of our claim, which we believe was clear and fully understood by the employers. The response to the claim could risk inflaming already considerable concern among local government and school staff and could very well lead to them rejecting the offer and to a further declining of morale on the ground. Once again we urge the employers to reconsider this and add one day's leave to the minima for all staff, however long their service, particularly as we are all very familiar with the fact that the current minimum of 21 days coverage is quite low and in only a handful of LA's.

You also failed to respond to the element of the joint union claim for a shorter working week – either with an offer, or any rationale for rejection or omission.

2) Joint approach to government. In your own response to us you indicated that you would speak to the Employers about a possible joint employer/union representation for a key workers' allowance or a boost to the current 2.75% offer. We feel we need to explore this in full before we start any pay consultation and ballot on the offer. We are keen to understand if the Employers are agreeable to a joint approach as we would like to get this under way as soon as possible. We would also welcome a discussion about what value is being explored above the current 2.75% offer, should extra money from government be

forthcoming – and what initial thoughts the Employers have had about how any extra money secured would be used.

In conclusion, whilst you may feel the offer is final, we don't share this view. There are two sides to this bargaining process and we don't think it helpful for one side to close down the bargaining process when issues are outstanding.

We look forward to your response.

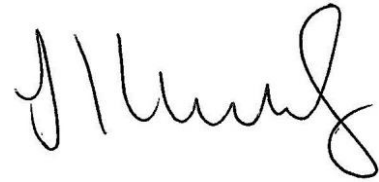
Yours sincerely



Rehana Azam GMB



Jon Richards UNISON



Jim Kennedy UNITE

Trade Unions Side Secretaries