



11 March 2022

## Hills Municipal Collections clarifies offer to GMB union strikers following acceptance of offer by both UNISON and UNITE membership

In light of certain statements made to local media outlets by GMB union representatives and members, we think it important to set out the facts.

Hills Municipal Collections offered a minimum two percent pay increase to all employees from 1 October 2021, in line with underlying inflation rate at the time. This offer was not accepted by the GMB Union, and they only entered into meaningful dialogue once they had determined to ballot for strike action.

The strike was called because Hills Municipal Collection workers, who are members of the GMB Union, wanted a 7% pay rise.

At these negotiations Hills Municipal Collections offered a pay increase of at least 2% backdated to October 2021 and brought forward the 2022 pay review date from October 2022 to May 2022, with an additional 5% pay rise from 1 May 2022.

This offer was accepted by UNISON membership but rejected by the GMB union.

Hills then revised the offer to pay the five percent from 1 March 2022. Overall, this represents a minimum 7.1% pay rise, with some employees achieving an even higher percentage increase up to 15%.

The revised offer was also accepted by UNITE members but was again rejected by the GMB union membership.

The delay in accepting the pay offer has caused real time delays to employees' pockets as they have gone without a pay rise that was due to them in October 2021, 6 months ago. We firmly believe that the pay offer provides a fair settlement in relation to inflation and indexation, which we know is impacting the cost of living. The offer is in line or ahead of comparable local pay awards and it provides positive certainty in a time of increasing volatility.

Further, a GMB union representative has incorrectly stated that employees are on £9 an hour and have not had a pay increase for four years.

We can confirm that all Hills Municipal Collections employees currently earn over £9 per hour, and Hills' offer will see salaries increase by at least 7.1% between October 2021 and 1 March 2022. Prior salary increase for this bargaining unit was in April 2019 (between 2% and 5.95%) and not four years ago. Due to the pandemic, no pay review was offered in 2020.

In addition, these frontline workers in Hills Municipal Collections received up to £300 lockdown bonus in November 2020 to reward them for their commitment and hard work over the first national lockdown during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, in both 2020 and 2021, we offered up to 10 days full pay per year for COVID related absences and sickness benefit entitlement on top of maintaining existing absence benefits, so that employees did not suffer loss of income due to self-isolation. **END**



Notes to editors:

Wiltshire Council awarded a contract to Hills Municipal Collections in 2018 to collect waste and recycling from all homes in Wiltshire. The service includes black bag waste, recyclables and green waste, as well as clinical, bulky waste and bin deliveries. The service collects from over 220,000 homes in Wiltshire which receive a fortnightly collection of waste and recyclables.

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