

## **TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME**

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### **1. Purpose**

To agree recompense for paid facilities time in respect of support for school based staff who are members of UNISON and the GMB.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that arrangements are made for:

- An amount to be allocated for 2007/08 from the headroom within the retained funding for Facilities Time from the Dedicated Schools Grant in respect of UNISON and the GMB,
- The allocation for Trade Union Facilities in respect of non-teaching school staff to be reviewed every two years (first review September 2008) taking account of union membership and activity within schools.

### **3. Issues and Choices**

#### Facilities Time

3.1 There is a legal requirement for reasonable paid facilities time to be granted to representatives of the Council's recognised trade unions.

3.2 Since 'Single Status' terms and conditions of service were adopted for school based staff in 1999 membership of UNISON and GMB has increased significantly within schools. Support for these union members in respect of employment issues is provided by recognised union representatives who are employees of the Council, but predominately based outside of schools. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Historically, centrally based representatives tend to be more experienced as they have greater involvement in a wider range of employee relation matters across all services of the Council.
- The absence of school based staff on paid facilities time is more noticeable and likely to have a greater impact on the school, given the smaller work group.

3.3 Currently, it is estimated that the GMB Branch Secretary spends 70% of his working week on schools issues and representing school based staff. This is a

reflection of the GMB's successful membership recruitment programme over the last two years. The estimate for UNISON facilities time is considerably less, but none the less provided by representatives from service areas outside of schools. The level of activity both now and in the future will reflect the membership of the two unions within schools. Based on this estimate, recompense is requested for the time spent on schools business to ensure that such support is not detrimental to the remainder of the Council.

#### **4. Implications**

##### Trade Union Facilities

#### **4.1 Policy**

The Council has an agreed Facilities Time Agreement with UNISON, and is seeking to agree a similar policy with GMB to provide facilities time in respect of union duties. It is important that appropriate time is provided in support of duties and relating to school-based staff and is efficient. The Facilities Time Agreement is in line with the ACAS Code of Practice. There is also the issue of equity between Trade Unions and Professional Associations with regard to Facilities Time.

#### **4.2 Resources**

If support for union members is no longer allowed from outside of schools, it will impact on employee relations within schools and across the Council. It will mean that less experienced union representatives are taking time out from their roles to undertake union duties, which in turn may impact upon the schools and their staff.

#### **4.3 Legal**

There is a legal requirement to provide a reasonable amount of paid facilities time to representatives of recognised trade unions and professional associations.