

Sunderland Council's £1.2million wages chop for high earners



Sunderland Civic Centre

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WAGE bills for high-earners at Sunderland City Council have been trimmed by more than £1million.

In the face of city-wide cuts, the authority has been carrying out some housekeeping of its own by reducing the number of employees earning £50,000 or more.

The number of high-earners fell from 128 in 2010/2011 to 109 in 2011/2012. This allowed the authority to make a saving of £1.2million.

The total wage bill for those earning £50,000-plus now stands at £7.5million.

Councillor Paul Watson, leader of the city council, said: "In the face of the severe cuts on public spending, the council has been working hard to ensure that highly valued front-line services are protected. This has

meant that we have taken the approach of looking at how we organise ourselves in order to meet efficiency requirements and protect services.

“As a result of this, there has been a reduction in the number of management roles across the council. This has contributed to the £100million of savings made in the last three years.

“In addition to these managerial posts, there are 1,474 fewer staff employed by the council compared to three years ago.”

Sunderland was one of 266 local councils which reduced the number of officials earning in excess of £50,000, although 118 did increase their numbers.

According to the Taxpayers’ Alliance, which compiled the latest figures, more needs to be done to reduce local authority wage bills in order to save money.

Robert Oliver, leader of Sunderland Conservatives, said: “We have been consistent in calling for the wage bill at the council to be reduced across the board and in line with other councils where officers from the chief executive downwards have had salaries trimmed.

“A wage of £50,000 is much higher than the average in the city, so it is right that only a few senior people earn this amount, leaving more opportunities for lower wage entrants into the system.

“Before the financial crisis, the council had approximately 14,000 employees on the pay roll – enough to run a small country never mind a mid-sized city – so there has been plenty of scope for reductions without a detrimental impact on services.”