



*In Waltham Forest*  
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**To Waltham Forest CJCC Members**

### **Trade Union Side Response to Council Reorganisation Phase 3**

UNISON is totally opposed to the cuts that are being proposed by Waltham Forest management. As Council members will be aware from the circular emails that UNISON has sent out, there is an alternative to the imposition of swingeing cuts to meet the national deficit. You are no doubt familiar with the Robin Hood Tax and fairer tax collection. There are other measures too that could resolve the deficit but the government chooses to ignore those in favour of a slash and burn approach to public sector spending. This approach is counter productive. It takes many thousands of public sector workers out of employment so they cease to be tax payers and instead become benefit claimants, costing the government money and also taking them out of the consumer market too as they can **no** longer afford to purchase non-essential items.

UNISON locally has called on the Council to resist the cuts, but Council members have agreed to pursue the cuts agenda so we arrive at this point with a series of unacceptable and unpalatable cuts being proposed by the senior management of the Council.

UNISON in Waltham Forest believes these cuts are unfair; they hit low paid and front line staff far harder than senior and better paid staff. We are therefore urging you to reject this package of cuts and refer them back with an instruction to management to revisit their proposals to ensure that the cuts, if they are to be applied at all, are applied across the board and are not protective of the better paid members of the Council's management team.

The trend towards protecting the higher paid at the expense of the lower paid in Waltham Forest Council is demonstrated by the increase in the number of employees earning £50,000 plus in the Council workforce:

		2008/2009	2009/10	Total Salary cost rise 2009/10
Number of staff earning £50,000+		354	384	£2,870,000 to £3,085,000

**NB: Figures taken from Waltham Forest Statement of Accounts 2009/10**

UNISON remains concerned about the continuing spend on consultants and interim management, often paid more than their directly Council employed peers, while permanent employees lose their jobs.

**Job Losses and New Posts by Grade**

Job Grade	Deletions	New Posts
CO3	2	1
CO2		1
PO12		3
PO11	5	3
PO10	4	4
PO9		0
PO8	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>
PO7/PO8	4	2
PO7/PO9	11	8
PO7	6	4
PO6	21	16
PO4/PO6	25	20
PO5/PO6	6	5
PO5	11	5
PO2/PO5	1	
PO4	38	26
PO4/5		3
PO3	18	41
PO3/4/5		3
Scale 3/PO3	7	
SO1/PO3	2	0
PO1/PO3	12	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>139</b>

Scale 6/PO3	3	26
Scale 6/SO1		2
Scale 6/PO1	1	11
PO2	21	14
PO1	57	24
SO1/PO1	9	4
SO2	74	31
SO1/SO2	17	11
Scale 6/SO2	2	
SO1	38	12
Scale 6	28	9
Scale 5/6	28	26
Scale 4/6	44	32
Scale 5	67	23
Scale 3/5	2	
Scale 4	96	22
Scale 3	5	2
Scale 2	1	0
Scale 1	1	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>268</b>

SWG	2	
LDR 11	1	
EIP 21	2	
EIP 19	1	
Soulbury BEP3A pt 13	1	
Soulbury BEPR 3A pt 15	1	
Soulbury BSEP2 pt 6	1	
Soulbury BSEP 2 pt 4	1	
Soulbury BSEP2 pt 2	1	
Soulbury EP2A pt 14	1	
Soulbury EP2A pt 13	1	
Soulbury EP2A pt 12	1	
Soulbury EP 1 pt 9	1	
Soulbury EP 1 pt 8	1	
Soulbury EPB pt 12-15		1
Soulbury EP1 pt 6	2	
Soulbury EP2 pt 12	2	
Soulbury Unknown	1	1
Soulbury EP A pt8-13		3
Soulbury 33		1
EIP 25		1
LSC Grade	1	
Rainee TEP 1	1	
Teacher Grades	2	
Craft	2	
Manual 5	1	
Unknown	5	
	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>433</b>

***NB: Figures taken from Consultation document Phase 3 15/10/2010***

Our table shows that the PO8 and above are well protected once more. There will be an increase in senior management as 13 such posts are deleted and 19 are created, a growth of 6 more staff that are graded at PO 8 and above.

**Changes to the Timetable**

The trade unions are concerned and disappointed by the recent management pronouncement to change the timetable so that those who lose their jobs will now be terminated on 11<sup>th</sup> May rather than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011, effectively robbing them of 3 weeks paid employment. Management announced this change on 7<sup>th</sup> January just 5 working days from the end of the formal consultation period. Employees had been informed of the original timetable and the Section 188 notice confirmed the original dates. UNISON believes that this is a shoddy and callous way to treat employees who face uncertain futures. To change the dates in this unilateral fashion without any proper prior consultation demonstrates a dismissive attitude towards the trade unions and all employees involved. We call upon the Council to reinstate the original timetable in order to restore some faith in the consultation process.

Furthermore, management have also announced that they will be axing jobs covered by external grants even more quickly. Despite informing staff in these posts of the original timetable and writing to them in accordance with that, management have now announced that such posts will be terminated as quickly as possible. For example, Careers Service Advisors have been informed that their posts will be terminated by 19<sup>th</sup> April. This is because management maintain that they do not need to report the termination of external grant funded posts to Cabinet. For the Careers Service Advisors in our example this means that the decision to cut their jobs will be taken by one unelected officer, The Director Of Children and Young People Services.

UNISON believes that staff should be treated equally across the board and management should stick to the timetable that was formally announced at the beginning of the consultation for all those staff whose posts are being deleted, even though we do recognise that management informed us from the start that externally grant funded posts would be treated differently. Unfortunately that was not made clear to some individuals until the last two weeks of the consultation period. By that I mean that they were not formally told that they, as individuals, were externally funded. Some were unaware that this was the case.

UNISON is also disappointed that the Council would not recognise Christmas and allow some extension to the 90 days statutory consultation period in recognition of the holidays and the fact that business slows down during the Christmas period. Many people take time off and visit family over that period. I understand that many councillors take a break during that period. We approached management to request an extension in recognition of this issue, but were unceremoniously turned down for financial concerns. It has the ring of a famous fictitious character created by Charles Dickens, doesn't it?

**Managing Change Procedures**

As the Transformation process has rolled on, the ring-fencing and selection processes have developed. Individual managers and local management teams have become more empowered to ensure that their proposals are not challenged successfully. We now see a process where members of staff wishing to appeal against assimilation and ring-fencing proposals have their cases heard by the managers responsible for the proposal. There is no independence in the process. We also see that the selection and interview panels are no longer required to meet any diversity criteria as the Council appears to have dropped the equal opportunities aspects of its recruitment and selection criteria.

UNISON calls on the Council to reinstate the hearing of appeals against assimilation and ring-fencing proposals by independent managers from another directorate and to ensure that diversity principles are upheld and are seen to be upheld by establishing criteria for interview and selection panels to reflect the diversity of the workforce.

### **Voluntary Severance**

UNISON **would ask you to consider** the complete lack of financial incentive for employees who may be willing to leave the Council. Other authorities are offering far better terms with financial inducements designed to attract applicants. In Waltham Forest you have to be in a job likely to be made redundant and you only receive the compulsory redundancy rate of payment.

It is also worth pointing out that Waltham Forest's redundancy terms are not as generous as some of our neighbouring local authorities. For example, we understand that Haringey currently offer staffs facing redundancy an extra weeks pay for each year of service in comparison with our redundancy terms.

### **Continuing Use of Consultants and Interim Managers**

The government recommendation when making the cuts was that councils should look **FIRST** at shared services and cutting higher salaries and back office functions. Looking through the proposals they appear to impact more negatively on lower paid and public facing jobs. Have the council looked at the fees they pay consultants and asked them to take a lower rate or shopped around rather than paying such high premiums (if the Council has to use them at all)?

Even now we are employing consultants to carry out a random survey of library users. UNISON understands that this exercise is costing £25,000 – the equivalent of one year's employment for an employee at around SO1 level. The proposals for Building Cleaning were developed through another consultancy, costing around £30,000. That's another employee's job for a year .

We note from the 2009/10 accounts that the Council spent over £20 million on Comensura, the company that recruits and provides consultants, interims and agency workers. This represented an increase of over £4 million on the previous year. It is a matter of real concern that the Council continues to spend freely in this area whilst its own permanent employees are losing their jobs. UNISON would suggest that a rigorous approach could see significant savings in this area.

We would urge the Council to review whether the consultants used so far do offer value for money. Some, particularly in Adult Social Care have been disastrous, for example it was a Consultant or Interim who was responsible for the devastation of our Occupational Therapy Service. Others have spent time and lots of money putting forward proposals that have been scrapped or put on hold. This cannot be a sensible way to spend the Council's money.

### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

UNISON believes that our members in Adult Social Care perform a vital job in protecting the most vulnerable adults in our community. With personalisation being implemented it would be sensible to ensure that there are enough workers employed to ensure that the implementation of the personalisation agenda is carried out sensitively with support and advocacy where required.

### **Assessment and Care**

The posts that are being deleted are mainly vacant posts that should be providing front line services, such as social work assistants and the cuts demonstrate the reducing levels of commitment to provide support services to the elderly and vulnerable members of our community. Management acknowledge that there will be a decrease in capacity.

### **Resources APO 23 Not supported (no members)**

*(Excerpt from alternative proposal)*

In the new model it is anticipated that Business Support Administrators will become direct reportees to individual Heads of Service. My alternate proposal is to review the service impact assessments, as it is clear this arrangement will not be in the interest of staff, Heads of Service, Service delivery/ service users.

### **Mental Health**

There are 2 part time admin posts being deleted, one is vacant the other is on a career break, and the post of Mental Health Housing Link worker (currently vacant) is being deleted. Other issues include reducing amount of respite offered by the Ferguson Centre. This is coming at a time when all voluntary organisations are required to re-tender for their contracts which could lead to a big gap in respite for service users with mental health respite needs.

### **Homecare (AP018.1 APO18.2 APO18.3) (Margaret - Supported)**

UNISON seeks proper consultation and the involvement of the home care employees in designing and implementing the new rota system that is being introduced, car drivers to be teamed up with non-car drivers working unsociable hours and for staff to have contact numbers at all times.

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES**

UNISON believes that these cuts to Children and Young Peoples Services should not be made at this point. The government have removed the Area Based grants that funded many of the posts in this directorate, but recent developments have shown that new funding may become available. The Early Intervention Grant will be replacing a number of previous government grants that supported services for children, young people and families. It is our understanding from the latest bulletins on the subject that this grant will ensure that no local authority will lose more than 12.9% when compared to the amount received via the predecessor grants. UNISON therefore calls on the Council to reject these current proposals and instruct management to develop a strategy of maintaining services to children, young people and families by effective use of this funding. There should be a review of the services previously funded by the Area based grants and all the funding streams that are now to be replaced by the Early Intervention Grant. Management can then demonstrate how this new grant could be used to maintain service levels in Children and Young People Services. Ignoring this development and making people redundant now might be a false economy as the Council may find itself employing new staff to jobs that previously existed as the extent and the amount of Early Intervention Grant becomes known. This might, in the medium term, save money by avoiding the payment of unnecessary redundancy payments. Given the content of the latest announcements any reductions to Children and Young People Services should certainly be restricted to 10.9% which is the DFE's mean figure for the anticipated reduction from previous grants in 2009/10 to the Early Intervention Grant in 2010/11.

The proposals contained in this Phase and in Phase 4 are a knee jerk reaction to the reduction of the area based grants. The Council should show some caution and patience to allow for the possible support available to services via the Early Intervention Grant to become known before it slashes the vital services as proposed.

### **Children and Families (APO45) (Not sure who made proposal)**

The reduction in the number of senior practitioners from 9 to 6 raises UNISON concerns regarding Child Protection in Waltham Forest, although we do recognise that management are not proposing

to reduce the overall numbers of case holding staff. Our members are concerned that there may be redundancies arising from the proposed reorganisation, despite management's anticipation that this will be avoided.

It is also worth noting that further changes are expected as a result of the Social Work Task Force recommendations and consideration of how the service might run on a different model in the future.

**Placement and Resources (APO11) (AP096-NOT supported) (AP011 Carol Parker - supported)**

The overall capacity for this important team that includes Fostering and Adoption is being decreased from 9 to 7 posts. UNISON is concerned about that reduction despite the management reassurances given in the consultation document.

(Excerpt from alternative proposal) .." *Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of Looked After Children is a vital step in delivering improved outcomes for this vulnerable group. Having the right placement in the right place at the right time, is a vital factor in improving placement stability, which in turn is a critical success factor in relation to better outcomes for looked after children...*" **Sufficiency Guidance CA1989**.....(See reference for full alternative proposal)

**Education for Communities**

UNISON is concerned that the proposals throughout Education in Communities leave a top heavy management structure. Managers have not proposed cuts to their own tier and have looked to the lower tiers of front line operational staff to make savings. Members are angry that despite massive cuts to the services the management team remains intact and will be responsible for far fewer staff in the future. UNISON believes that this cannot be realistically justified.

**SEN and Integrated Education Support Services (APO2.1 – 2.6) (APO 5.1 – 5.4) (APO 7.1 – 7.3) APO 43 APO48 APO49 APO55 APO58 (Dave to comment)**

The cuts proposed in this area are devastating, Educational Psychology is cut from 12 to 4 posts, Education Welfare from 19 to 5 posts and Behaviour Support is scrapped entirely.

These teams provide vital support to children and families who experience difficulties in mainstream education. They support schools in maintaining attendance rates and dealing with children who display difficult behaviour. It is impossible to predict the long term impact of the loss of these posts and the experience and commitment of the staff currently employed to fulfil these roles.

One can envisage that school attendance rates will decline as school attendance enforcement and support are reduced. It is can also be expected that problem behaviour in schools will result in an increase in school exclusions for children and young people as the support to schools to deal with such issues is removed. The loss of the Behaviour Support Team will bring about real difficulties for Schools, the children and their families. One can see that these cuts will have serious long term impact and may well result in longer term costs in the future. It is services like these that UNISON believes should be supported by the Early Intervention Grant. Unfortunately Waltham Forest Council is acting to cut such important services prior to proper consideration of that grant.

These services are also being looked at as possible traded services with schools. That work has hardly begun with schools only now being consulted. For all these support services UNISON believes that the Council should hold back and look at how schools react so that the cuts may be averted.

In UNISON'S view these services are as much about people as about money but the emphasis on making the cuts quickly is spiralling so far out of control the cuts the Council are now considering risk bringing worse problems in the future.

**Careers Service APO20, APO31, APO24, APO25, APO26, APO28, APO29 (Dave to comment)**

Support for young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training will also be hard hit as the Careers Service is cut by just over a third in terms of staffing capacity. The cuts come at a time when it is predicted that youth unemployment will rise in the borough. It is already at alarming levels and cutting this service can only make the situation worse for our young people.

The government have announced that they intend to introduce an All Age Careers Service to be launched in September 2011. This service would be an independent and impartial service delivered by professionally qualified staff and accessible to all young people and adults. Until we know the detail of that service and how it will be provided, UNISON suggests that any reorganisation in the Careers Service is premature. It might even be the case that the Council may make Careers Advisors redundant now, only to have to employ more come September. That would be a waste of money in terms of paying unnecessary redundancy payments.

UNISON has contacted schools in Waltham Forest who use the Careers Service and will be planning to present a petition showing the relevant schools are opposed to the drastic cuts in this service at the Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

The Careers Service should also be looked at again in terms of the Early Intervention Grant and the Schools traded services consultation. It is also worth considering the long term damage to the young people of this borough, the potential damage to the local economy and the future potential costs involved in having unsupported, unemployed young people who face a bleak future living in Waltham Forest.

## **ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION**

### **Voluntary Sector and Community Engagement**

UNISON does not support the Con Dem government's view on the Big Society and certainly hopes that Waltham Forest Council will oppose the replacement of properly employed and paid staff by volunteers that is envisaged. Nevertheless, it does appear to be a short sighted decision to reduce the number of staff employed in voluntary sector engagement given the government pronouncements and the voluntary sector response to date.

### **Community Safety**

At a time when austerity is the watchword of government and poverty is expected to increase, it can be anticipated that the need for community safety will grow. It is somewhat surprising then to note reductions on the scale proposed – with 5 potential redundancies - in this area.

The reduction in Community Safety Project manager posts is bound to have a negative impact on important areas of work like Domestic Violence, Forced Marriages and other key policy areas.

### **Enforcement (Graffiti Team)**

UNISON doubts that the general public perception of graffiti in Waltham Forest will have improved and we are therefore surprised that this service is to be reduced. We are also somewhat alarmed that management have proposed that they will be introducing lone working in this area.

UNISON demands that proper risk assessments of this activity are carried out prior to introducing such practices in this service.

### **Environmental Health and Trading Standards APO35 (Sandra Bennett proposal, supported)**

The Council's ability to enforce proper standards will be adversely affected by these proposals. The proposals impact not only on Trading Standards but also on Noise and Licensing. In all three areas there are reasons to be alarmed.

Licensing is also an area that raises revenue for the Council and the loss of posts in this area may reduce the income that the team provides.

It is clear that areas such as counterfeit goods, public health, overloaded vehicles and internet scams will all be less well policed at the very time when such activities are likely to increase due to the government's austerity drive.

UNISON believes that the loss of 6 staff from this area is counter – productive to the overall health and safety of our borough. (*See alternative proposal reference as above*)

### **Housing APO30.1 APO30.2 APO30.3 ( Hostels -Supported)**

In the current structure there are 4 handy persons and 2 hostel service officers who cover 11 units for vulnerable homeless people. The proposal to reduce the number of handy persons to 2 and the hostel services officers to 1 and for them to cover the 11 hostels on a mobile basis.

This is a front line service being provided to the most vulnerable people in our society. Their role includes repairs and maintenance, admissions to the hostel's, lock changes, dealing with contractors, cleaning room's, deal with emergencies, i.e. no hot water/heating, security and office cover. Staffs currently work in pairs when cleaning rooms for health and safety and security purposes. This would mean either compromising health and safety/security or only being able to cover one hostel at a time.

There appears to be no provision in the proposal for sickness and annual leave cover or for health and safety. There will be time lost travelling from one unit to another. There will also be a review of hostels in the next 12 months; there is a possibility that women only hostels could be outsourced to housing associations. There is also a possibility as part of the review that some of the hostels could be sold and the money used to update the remaining hostels. There could be a proposal to procure accommodation outside of Waltham Forest i.e. in Luton.

UNISON is very concerned about the above proposals. Although there has been a slight reduction in temporary accommodation recently it is also expected that the demand will rise again in the very near future due to housing benefit changes and the increase in unemployment. UNISON feel that the above proposal is very short sighted and will result in the loss of 3 jobs for our members in front line services which Councillors have vowed to protect.

There are plans to reduce posts in Housing from 42 to 22. These cuts will occur at a time when there is likely to be real pressure on our housing services as Housing Benefit claimants are forced to leave more expensive parts of London **as recognised by Marie Pye in her interview with BBC news Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January**. UNISON has serious concerns about the workload implications and stress on members working in this service.

### **2012 Team**

Two posts are to be lost in this area, which management acknowledge will cause delays and deletion of some of the work programme initiatives.

### **Development Management**

UNISON believes that the loss of posts in this service will have an impact on the Council's ability to deliver the service as officers dealing with case work will be obliged to take on administrative duties currently carried out by staff whose posts are being deleted. **The team are public facing and deal with complaints regarding planning applications etc. To reduce the administrators will mean that complaints will rise as service users cannot get to speak to somebody, there will be delays in responding to callers to the office and telephone queries. This will also impact in the remaining staff with an impossible workload.**

### **Economic Development**

The severe reduction in staffing levels with 11 posts being deleted and only 1 being created in this area will impact negatively on the Council's ability to support business and tackle the growing rate of unemployment in the borough. Staffs in this area of work are already under pressure as they try to cover the work of posts left vacant. There are likely to be serious workload issues for the staff left behind after the cuts have been made.

### **Physical Regeneration**

UNISON believes that regeneration is a priority for Waltham Forest Council and the proposal to cut posts in this area can only reduce the Council's ability to provide regeneration programmes. UNISON notes that there is likely to be a negative impact on access issues.

### **Trade Waste AP 001 AP 006 (supported? Impact on finance team)**

UNISON is concerned about the reduction of Council involvement in Trade Waste generally. Trade Waste is an issue for this borough and the loss of these posts will have a negative impact. **This again could be an income generating service for Waltham Forest if managed and administered properly.**

### **Highways AP 004 (Linda Savage and Paul Binney – supported)**

UNISON is very concerned at the proposals to reduce the work of the Accident Prevention Unit. The management consultation exercise with schools was left until very late so that schools did not receive the information until the beginning of this term and also neglected to mention a closing date, which would be 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

There is an error in the report as there is no compliance officer in accident prevention; that post is in Asset Management.

The Service Review carried out in August 2010 and mentioned in this report does not reflect the amount and range of work carried out by the section, but the report is quoted. The cuts were based on this report. Which staffs feel is inaccurate and gave an unfair assessment of the service.

**Expert from alternative proposal:** The councils Lip submission gives a commitment to road safety and by putting the function in the engineering group will not enable road safety to function with any clarity or give road safety maximum coverage within the Borough.

### **Transport Planning**

The reductions here will leave Transport Planning as an area with only two employees. The impact includes the loss of work on cycling policy, schools and business travel plans. Given the priority that this Council has given to transport issues in the borough, the loss of these services will be keenly felt.

### **Facilities Management and Building Cleaning**

UNISON is extremely concerned about the management proposals to cut the FM workforce from 39 staff overall down to 13 – a cut of two thirds.

The proposals appear to have taken no account of health and safety procedures such as Fire Wardens, a role which facilities assistants carry out as part of their duties. There is the possibility that in the case of an emergency there will be no staff present taking responsibility for overseeing any evacuation procedures or for dealing with the building as a whole.

UNISON believe that there are potential cost implications for these proposals that are not being taken into account.. For example, if there is flooding in one of our buildings it is very likely that one of the premises staff will be on to the problem very quickly. If there is no one on site and only a mobile service then it is possible that there will be a long delay in resolving the problem with all the threat of damage to property and threat to health and safety that such a situation could involve.

On some sites, like Rowan House, there are particular security issues. UNISON is worried about the health and safety implications when security is compromised.

There are currently no risk assessments attached to the proposals. UNISON believes that risk assessments should be produced and consulted upon before the cuts to staff are agreed and implemented.

The proposals assume that there will be a mobile workforce facilitated by vans. This will mean staff driving around the borough at a cost to the Council and to the environment.

Our members in Building Cleaning are very angry about the proposals management are putting forward to cut their wages by restricting the hours they can work and reducing the workforce from 78 posts in all (33.76 FTE's) to just 37 posts (13.04 FTE's).

We would like councillors to consider why the Council is acting so punitively to its lowest paid workers whilst defending and protecting highly paid management and interim management posts and consultants. No other group of workers are being attacked in this fashion. For some members these cuts will mean potential eviction and financial hardships.

UNISON believes that Building Cleaning and FM could be traded services that could be developed into a income generating operation for the Council should the Council see fit to expand the service. No consideration appears to have been given to this idea.

This service provides a better quality cleaning service than the private agencies in the cleaning market. The cuts will have a detrimental effect on that quality. The proposals will mean dirtier Council premises. Is that desirable?

Huge cuts in jobs are being proposed that are disproportionate with the level of cuts made at senior management level. UNISON members in this service feel that low paid jobs are being sacrificed to maintain high paid positions.

The proposals to cut working hours to 10 each week for all staff will cause extreme hardship for many of these workers who will have to turn to the benefit system for support and face potential evictions and mounting debt problems. As most of these workers are local residents it would seem that the Council commitment to combatting poverty and prioritising employment for local residents is being compromised.

Councillors will recognise that there will be significant impact on the staff's pension arrangements. Low paid workers are again being hit harder than the well paid.

UNISON is alarmed to learn that at the same time as making these cuts management intend to introduce finger print swiping machines to all sites for cleaning workers (the lowest paid staff on the Council's books) to have to swipe in and swipe out.

Our members were also concerned that management have tied them into a purchasing contract that does not represent the cheapest materials available on the market. We are informed that the Council has signed up to a single supplier deal with that company for all its cleaning products.

The trade unions believe that these proposals are unfair to our lower paid members and call on the Council to protect the low paid rather than punishing them in order to protect the higher paid employees of the Council.

We urge all Council members to carefully consider whether this service should be cut so extensively at this time. We understand work is currently going on to reduce the number of workplaces run by the Council. Surely any reductions should wait until we have more information about that.

### **FINANCE AP 012 (Lyn Troughton? Supported)**

The large scale reduction of staff in Finance will bring further difficulties to an area that the Council already struggles with. Last year's independent panel report showed inadequacies in Council systems and it is UNISON's view that these inadequacies will become heightened if these cuts go ahead. The report admits that a review will be required as some activities will need to cease and also points out that reductions in fraud prevention and investigation will result in a review of prosecution and recovery processes. UNISON believes that this could lead to an increase in undetected fraud and a reduction in investigations and prosecutions.

### **ICT APO16 (Moshe -)**

#### **PHASE 4 ISSUE**

UNISON notes that there is a proposal to reduce the Notice of Termination contained in Phase 4. Senior Management's terms do not change at all. They continue to receive the full 12 weeks currently provided for all staff. However below PO9 the period decreases for those with less than 12 years service to as little as one month's notice.

At a time when there are huge cuts being made in local authorities our members feel very angry at their employers for introducing such a proposal. We therefore call on the CJCC to reject this proposal and take the matter to Cabinet with a view to returning to the current arrangements.

UNISON believes that this proposed new system will be difficult to administrate as employees will have different terms applied to them according to length of service so notice periods will vary widely and will need careful wording whenever a letter is sent. At the moment employees all have the same notice period meaning that standard letters can be used.

The shortening of the period will effectively shorten the redeployment period. This means that staff who may have been redeployed in time may find themselves redundant. This could cost the Council money in redundancy payments that may have been avoided.

If the CJCC cannot support the trade union position on this, then the trade union side will have to consider registering a formal dispute.

#### **CONCLUSION**

There are several recurring themes running through this report. The trade union side believes that money currently spent on high salaries for the best paid employees, high payments for consultants and interims and high payments for projects that bear little or no fruit should cease. The money made available should be used to ensure that the Council stick to the principle of saving as many of our front line services as we can.

Throughout this report UNISON has argued that these cuts are unfair and has demonstrated once again that the senior, high paid executives of the Council continue to protect their jobs and pay. It is in essence an approach that reflects, at a micro level, the way that the government approaches the problem of the national deficit. UNISON cannot accept this strategy as it is unfair and places the burden of paying for the economic crisis on those who had no part in causing it. The stark difference in the way that high paid and low paid staffs are treated in these proposals is demonstrated by the attacks made on the working arrangements and jobs of staff such as cleaners and porters. No senior manager is having their working hours reduced and the senior management team are not being cut by up to two thirds. That is what is proposed in Phase 3 for the low paid workers caught up in the reorganisation ~~Phase 3~~.

UNISON is also concerned at the dismissive and callous approach to making staff redundant. Changing the timetable so that everyone loses out just before the end of the consultation period, offering no inducement for voluntary severance, offering no independent appeals and having no diversity criteria for selection and interview panels all show a level of contempt for workers not previously experienced on such a scale in Waltham Forest. Your employees are unhappy, they are uncertain about their futures and they see the Council as an employer that is unwilling to argue for them while the consultants and the executives enjoy increasing prosperity.

Many of the cuts will have a serious impact on the well being of the borough. Serious cuts to areas like Economic Development, Community Safety and Development Control will hamper the Council's attempts to improve our community. Our young people, already facing difficult times in employment and in education are losing vital support that has been provided by Careers Advisors, Education Welfare Officers and Educational Psychologists – all of which now face devastating cuts. The knock on effect of not supporting our young people will be felt in the future.

Cuts to our enforcement workers will mean that the borough is likely to suffer from more crime and lower standards as officers previously tasked with enforcing trading standards and environmental health are lost.

It also feels like the decisions are being rushed. Cuts are being made to areas where further funding might yet become available like the Early Intervention Grant. It leaves our members feeling that the Council are keen to get rid of their workers.

UNISON calls on councillors to use their position as our local representatives to campaign against the cuts. These cuts should not be inflicted upon our community – they are unfair and unjust.

The CJCC should reject these proposals and recommend that Cabinet reviews its position and instruct the management of Waltham Forest to ensure that our front line services are properly protected.

Dave Knight  
Branch Secretary  
UNISON in Waltham Forest