



Mr M. Esom,
Chief Executive,
Waltham Forest Town Hall
Forest Road
Walthamstow E17 4JF

8th March 2013

Dear Mr Esom,

Re: UNISON Response to formal consultation – Phase 2-2013 Property and Major Projects

Property

The Facility management proposals for this phase were formulated by an external company, Turner and Townsend, bought in, UNISON would imagine, at some considerable cost to advise Waltham Forest on how best to re-organise this area of business. Their findings were:

'The review found that there was no consistent or clearly articulated operating model and that some important control mechanisms relating to contract management; programme and cost management are not in place.'

UNISON feels that this was an unnecessary expense given the financial constraints that Waltham Forest has been in for the past 2+ years. The money spent on this company could have been used to save some of the jobs that are proposed for deletion.

Again, PO12 posts are being created and lower graded posts being deleted. The job descriptions that were written for FM posts were not fit for purpose and had to be re-written. The final version was made available to UNISON and its members today, the last day of consultation, we will be responding to those separately.

Major projects

Questions raised by this area of the business

It is barely 2 years since the carbon management and energy management groups were rationalised into one combined unit and salary savings achieved by placing the borough's Energy Manager onto half time working. This management change has operated well between then & now both in terms of costs and service delivery, so why change it again?

The post of Energy Manager is currently working with the LEP and other boroughs to determine the best way forward on how to procure quarterly based electricity supplies post April 2014. This business is worth about £1.6M pa in LBWF housing, schools & operational buildings. If it is not dealt with effectively there could be an increase in costs of about 40% (£640k). Why is saving the cost of half a PO6 salary (22k pa + on costs) more significant than this potential financial risk? Other contracts worth £3.7M pa are already in place, which would exacerbate the risk in future.

The Head of Procurement has not been made aware of the proposed re-structure, UNISON feel this should have been addressed as it may prompt concern over the procurement of energy, and attaining VFM for LBWF.

Similarly the Head of Development Management should also be informed, as some of the current post holders time is also spent on dealing with the energy/water/environmental considerations of planning applications. For example, someone had to deal with these matters for the Olympic Park both before the games and for subsequent legacy matters with little input from neighbouring borough's.

In parallel with this the current post holder also has to acquire new supplies of gas and electricity for major refurbishment projects & new developments. They could not function without these utilities.

If the combined carbon reduction/energy mgt. team is going to be re-located to Housing & Development, then it would make more sense to move it across in the form it is now, and then re-structure it as necessary after the move has taken place. Once re-located things should become clearer in terms of work requirements, and the team could then be set up accordingly to suit. Surely this would be in the best interests of the section concerned.

The proposal to delete this post ahead of the move to Housing and development appears to be short sighted but the response from Management was curt at best.

Regards

Christine Street
UNISON