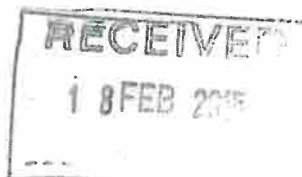


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13 February 2015

Dear Chris

Council Re-organisation 9/2014

Thank you for your response to the above.

I agree that we have had a range of reorganisation programmes to meet the challenges of the financial pressures faced by the Council. I am also aware that these programmes have resulted in the loss of significant numbers of staff. The detail of the current financial situation is outlined in the consultation document, so that the overall context of the proposal is clear.

While I accept that we do have large numbers of agency staff working within the Council these are primarily used in Family Services. These areas are not affected by management's proposals. Also permanent staff at risk have the opportunity and ability to be considered for any vacant role within the Council including those occupied by an agency member of staff. However, as I am sure that you appreciate, any redeployee must meet the qualifying criteria of any role they wish to be considered for.

In terms of the responses to various elements of the proposals I can provide the following:

Regeneration and Growth

I would note that the 93 agency roles referred to in your responses were located in Environment and Regeneration, which as a directorate no longer exists. There are relatively few posts filled by agency staff in the current Growth & Regeneration Directorate. There will be even fewer in the new Regeneration & Growth and Housing & Growth Departments which are the subject of these reorganisation proposals. It is our intention to recruit permanently to all roles and of course all of these roles will be available to any suitable qualified redeployees.

It is acknowledged that the Employability team has only recently been established. However, the strategic economic and growth priorities of the council are changing and we have to redirect resources to meet these changes.

A range of delivery options are being explored for the New Homes Bonus Funding and for the s.106 funding that is available for employment initiatives.

Where appropriate, partner organisations will be consulted on delivery arrangements. I wish to make clear there is no requirement on the Council to consult with external bodies on



internal staff restructures. If there are changes in delivery arrangements on specific programmes requiring consultation with individual funding partners, this will be undertaken at the appropriate stage.

The Council is not required to carry out an equalities impact analysis as you have suggested. Management Board have agreed that an equalities impact assessment will be carried out at the end of each year. Unions were consulted on this approach. It is also important to note that all services within the Council will have been through, or are about to go through a reorganisation, and nearly all staff will be affected by these. In terms of future provision of services, the Council will continue to target investment, business and employment advice for those most in need of those services and will keep this under review.

I am advised that all responses have been sent to staff regarding queries raised in response to management's proposals. While I acknowledge that UNISON supports alternative proposal AP93003 a full management response has been provided to this. I also understand that this has already been shared with UNISON representatives.

I note that you have raised issues surrounding options available for staff within this team. My only response to this can be that the Council's policy on ring fence interviews is clear and will be applied to this restructure in a consistent manner.

I wish to also make clear that there is no proposal to transfer the work of the team to Enterprise Enfield or any other social enterprise. New services (such as a new Employment Brokerage Team) may be commissioned, but this will not include existing activities, which will be contained within the new more flexible structure proposed.

I am aware that the proposal to transfer workplace planning and major works to NPSL has been delayed and a decision regarding this is not anticipated to take place until September 2015. Should this proposal be reconsidered, then appropriate consultation will take place with affected staff and unions in good time.

Families

To clarify, none of the posts affected by the Children's Centre review are involved in the management and delivery of local day care facilities. The core purpose of Children's Centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in: child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and child and family health and life chances'. Pre-school daycare provision is provided by a mixed economy of private, maintained and voluntary sector providers of nurseries, childminders and maintained schools. There is close partnership working across these services but Children's Centres are not funded to provide daycare services.

The Council is currently increasing childcare places in order to deliver the new Free Education Entitlement available to 40% of deprived families with children aged two years. The Children's Centre review allows flexibility to place a number of displaced staff in newly created posts and vacancies. In addition, the Family Directorate will explore every opportunity to redeploy staff in accordance with the Council's redeployment procedures. The Council has agreed with the relevant School Governing Bodies that staff employed within schools to delivery Children's Centre services can be treated as Council wide redeployees.

Customer Services Unit

I note that the rationale for these proposals is to ensure that the Council is focussing as much of our staffing as possible on the delivery of front line services. In addition, the intention is to offer greater support to management roles, which in turn will allow management to focus on performance management and service delivery. As outlined in the consultation document, the new structure will allow for a simpler and more efficient resourcing model in Libraries. In addition management will redesign rosters and daily staff deployment schedules, to respond to customer demand.

The customer services area shows a net reduction of 15.9 FTE. Management are not anticipating that there will be a reduction in service or delivery as a result of these deletions. Management acknowledge that staff may have concerns with respect to the impact of the redesign and are sympathetic to this.

It is acknowledged that there are currently 28 posts currently filled by agency staff in this service. The service is making concerted efforts to reduce these numbers and the redesign proposals will assist in achieving this. However, to ensure business continuity, agency staff will only be released during this restructure once management have completed the recruitment process and successful applicants are in place.

I would like to confirm that staff based at libraries will not be subject to any increased health and safety risks and management will ensure the libraries carry out any risk assessments following the implementation of the new service to ensure that this is the case.

Finance

There appears to have been some misunderstanding of this proposal. The proposal seeks to negate the need to use agency staff rather than promote it. As explained in the proposal the Government's rollout of Universal Credit will result in a reduction in the Housing Benefit caseload which will in turn will mean that fewer staff will be needed to carry out this function. The staff within the service have been aware of this for a few years now and some are choosing to leave the service and take up alternative employment. There is very little point recruiting to posts within the service as they become vacant as:

1. It takes 6-12 months to fully train inexperienced staff in what is a very technical area of work.
2. There will be an on-going need to reduce staffing numbers, so permanently filling vacant posts could potentially put other permanent staff at risk.

For the reasons outlined above agency staff have been used to fill vacancies, deal with any fluctuations in work demand and help clear any backlogs. Engaging a resilience company to process work offsite will reduce (and ultimately remove) reliance on agency staff. It will also allow the service to continue with the strategy of keeping unfilled posts vacant to be offered up as savings as the caseload reduces. By doing this we will be reducing the number of permanent staff at risk of redundancy.

It is important that UNISON note that 10 Benefits Officer posts and a Team Leader posts were proposed for deletion under these proposals. All posts are vacant so no permanent member of staff has been put at risk as a result of this particular proposal.

Highways and Infrastructure

Following the receipt of alternative proposals and comments as part of the consultation process, there have been a number of alterations made to management's proposals. The proposal to delete the post of Regulatory and Contracts Manager (PO5) along with the creation of a new post of Regulatory and Contracts Officer (PO3) have been withdrawn.

Similarly, the proposal to transfer the management of the School Crossing Patrol Officers (SCPOs) from the Project Development Team to the Highways Maintenance Team and for these staff to be line managed by the Highway Maintenance Team Leader has also been withdrawn. The line management of the SCPOs will remain within the remit of the Project Development Team.

With regard to the Highways Information Support Officer this post will be deleted for the reasons outlined in the re-organisation consultation document. In accordance with HR procedures all efforts will be made to identify and secure alternative employment within the Council through the redeployment process.

I note the concern of the unions regarding these proposals. However management must continue to strive to maintain front line service delivery, redirect resources and reprioritise services provided in the face of continued cuts to funding. The Council will also continue to look for alternative ways of making savings without putting staff at risk, and when this is necessary, employ procedures aimed at redeploying affected staff.

Yours sincerely



Martin Esom
Chief Executive

Copy to: Emma Peters - Regeneration & Growth and Housing & Growth
Cate Duffy & Daniel Phelps – Education Improvement
Ed Meyrick – Customer Services
Terry Borkett - Finance
Vala Valavan – Highways & Infrastructure