

UNISON proposal

Budget 2011/12

Our report has been produced following the publication of the Committee report the Council's website. It is important to note that we were not granted access to the report prior to its publication and therefore have not been able to comment on the issues identified in the Committee report before its publication to the wider public.

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UNISON is Britain's biggest public service trade union and represents more than a million voices delivering essential services to the public. Services that protect, enrich and change lives. But our members don't just work in public services - they and their families rely on them too.

We believe that cutting back public service spending and putting our services in the hands of private companies through more privatisation puts all our communities at risk. UNISON is speaking up for public services and for the people who provide them. That's why we are campaigning at a national, regional and local community level to make the case for properly-funded, publicly-provided local services.

Summary

1. Consultation began on Friday 3rd December 2010. There was discussion with our HR colleagues as to the process. The Trade Unions attempted to work together with HR to help what was inevitably going to be a stressful for staff receiving at risk letters.
2. The Trade Unions in the pre-consultation meeting objected to the issuing of at risk letters.
3. The Trade Unions expressed on a number of occasions long before 3 December the need for HR to provide names of staff receiving at risk letters. This was refused.
4. The Trade Unions asked for details of the posts at risk and this was refused.
5. In previous years there has been good collaborative working and the above requests were treated favourably and assisted the consultation process.
6. The Trade Unions asked that when 1:1 meetings were to take place that we were notified in advance in order that would be able to provide representation. The response to this request was sporadic, in some services there was good collaborative working and in other services it was poor.
7. On **Thursday 6 January** the Trade Unions were prevented from tabling their interim response to the Council Budget. It was a brief report which merely highlighted some of our concerns. This was a departure from previous Budget JNCC's.

Consultancy & Agency spend.

The issue of Consultancy and Agency spend has been repeatedly raised at previous Council Budget consultations. Over time promises have been made that this information would be provided. It is true that information is produced but it is the robustness and quality of the information that is of concern to the Trade Unions as it is to the local tax payer.

The issue which appears to challenge the Council is providing a definition of a consultant and an agency worker. Each year we have offered to put together a policy which we could jointly agree. It is important that during consultation the Employer seeks to provide easily understandable and accessible information to the Trade Unions in order to ensure all attempts have been made to mitigate making staff redundant.

The Council through its industrial relations machinery produces Agency figures, more often than not these are repeatedly inaccurate. The reasons behind the inaccuracy of the agency data have changed over time but the problem remains the same.

“How can an organisation afford not to know how many Agency workers they employ?”

Furthermore, since the publication of the Council spend over **£500** we have requested confirmation about Agency & Consultancy spend in the understanding that there was likely to be a high number of redundancies this year.

We carried out an exercise whereby we extrapolated the **Consultancy spend** data based on figures released in August; the result of which the Council was looking to spend **£38,733,307.98**. We carried out the same exercise in relation to **Agency workers** and found the Council was looking to spend **£8,309,206.92**. These two figures when understanding that staffing spend takes up a large part of Council spend are not insubstantial figures.

Recommendation

The Council undertakes as a matter of urgency a review of all payments to staff not employed directly by the Council.

Furthermore we recommend that the Council refer to the HMRC Guidelines in particular the advice to be found here that explains that **“It's your responsibility to correctly determine the employment status of your workers - that is, whether they're employed by you or self-employed. This depends on the terms and conditions of your working relationship with each worker.**

It's important to get your workers' employment status right because it affects the way tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) are calculated for them. And it determines whether or not you have to operate PAYE (Pay As You Earn) on their earnings.”

Read full details here

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payee/employees/start-leave/status.htm>

Senior management savings

Chief Executive restructure

In times of “austerity” and ever increasing scrutiny of public service spend it is important that our council structures recognise this. We believe there are further savings at Directorate level which would mitigate the need to cut some frontline services. The recent Chief Executive’s restructure of Directors was a step in the right direction. However there is still uncertainty about the level of savings made from merging **Environment & Operations Directorate and Planning, Housing & Regeneration (PHR) Directorate**. Currently we still have two Directors (albeit one is an interim) operating across the two Directorates.

“Where is the saving which could be used to protect frontline services?”

Merge the Director’s posts for Adults & Children’s Service.

There was time when it sufficed to have a Director of Social Services. A [poll](#) by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services “*revealed fourteen per cent of directors say there are plans to merge their posts with another in the next six months.*”

This would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.

Delete the Deputy Director of Children’s Service post.

This post was only created last year. The Trade Union opposed this as we understood Children’s Services would be facing serious cuts to funding. In light of the number of frontline services that are being cut or deleted across Children’s Service this is a post the Council cannot afford. We understand the funding for this post came from the transfer of funding from the Learning Skills Council only last year of which only 3 staff were TUPE transferred.

This would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Executive Directorates

Merge the above Directorates & AD posts reconfigured to release savings which **would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.**

Senior management posts:

We are asking that all senior posts at **AD level and above** currently filled by a consultant/agency/secondment be identified. A timetable must be agreed for these posts to be filled by permanent staff. In the event for some reason that these posts are not filled; a full business case must be provided to explain why; and an agreed timetable to review this decision.

PHR Directorate

Reconfigure the number of **Assistant Director posts** which **would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.**

Salaries

Review the salaries for Directors and Assistant Directors with a view to restricting them to a ceiling of no more than **£100,000 p.a.** (the salary of a social worker is around £33,000 p.a.).

This would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.

Priority Intervention Team

In October 2010 a newly named post of Enforcement and Operations manager was appointed at a time when the organisation should have already been making plans to deliver efficiencies. The post which is being deleted was able to run this team at a lower grade, it is our view that this post should not be deleted instead.

Delete Enforcement and Operations manager post.

This would enable any savings to be ploughed back into frontline services.

Children's Services and Adults Social Services

Impact of Cuts

We are concerned about the accumulative impact of the cuts proposed.

Children's Services

There is a desire to reduce the number of children attending SEN residential schools by 20. Yet Behavioural and High Incidence support and educational psychology is to be cut to the statutory minimum. Where are schools to get the support then for integrating children who had previously been attending SEN residential schools?

In addition the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is to be reduced, support for the Teenage pregnancy service is to be withdrawn, commissioning of services for supporting and preventing substance misuse is to be ceased and the current Youth provision will cease.

This comes on top of the ceasing of the EMA and the increase in University tuition fees at a national level. In other words key programmes and measures for supporting young people and preventing the issues for young people spiralling into major difficulties are being cut away which potentially means their problems go unresolved and they get picked up when their issues are much more complex. Quite how this could lead to a hoped for reduction in Social Workers in Children's Services by year 3 is unclear and unconvincing.

We are concerned the proposals in Year 1 for the Children's Service will result in heavier workloads for our colleagues remaining in the service.

Youth Offer letter to Director of Children's Services dated 26th January 2011, no reply to date. See Appendix 1.

Adult Social Services

We believe the cuts to the **Home Treatment Team social workers** which is **highly valued** by the Mental Health Trust and colleagues working alongside them (see petition in Appendix 2), will reduce the social care perspective in that team. We do not support the view that this can be easily done away with. We also believe that a reduction in these workers will result in more work for the other colleagues who are already stretched and a less joined-up approach within the service as any social care intervention will have to come from outside the HTT. In Adults Social Services there is no evidence there will be a significant decrease in **Safeguarding cases** over the next 2-3 years and therefore a projected reduction in social work staff in year 3 remains unclear and unconvincing. Projecting a reduction in social workers as well as reducing the budget for Training represents a potential increase in pressure on the remaining social workers and assessment & enablement officers.

The projected saving on the **Barnet Garden Project** is very small compared to the budget as a whole. There are reassurances that the service users will find suitable alternatives. This begs the question as to why this was not achieved before, if it were really so easy. This would have enabled other service users to use the project and also potentially other service users who do not have a Learning Disability but any other form of impairment – temporary or otherwise.

We are concerned about an accumulative effect of reductions in specialist services to Adults with Learning Disability and the pressure this will place on carers, other professionals and service users.

The removal of the current **Sheltered Warden Scheme** is based on the assumption that the rest of the population not covered by the scheme are at a disadvantage. There is **no evidence** that this is a major concern by population not covered by the scheme. Feedback from the Council's own consultation is that **more people** wish to keep the on-site wardens. The savings equate to some **£150,000** next year. This represents a cut based more on **ideological reasons** as what is not calculated into the saving is the potential for having to increase care arrangements to cover issues currently offset by having on-site wardens.

Equality Impact Assessments

We have requested these assessments throughout the consultation and only had sight of Assessments once they were put online with the Budget papers.

The only EIA regarding staff we have seen is attached to the updated Budget Report for Cabinet 14.2.2011. This is an EIA on all staff as a whole and does not breakdown to the Services affected. Therefore we cannot tell if any particular area will be adversely affected. This is an inadequate approach to Equality issues in the Council.

Recommendations

1. The Council undertakes as a matter of urgency a **review of all payments** to staff not employed directly by the Council. Furthermore we recommend that the Council refer to the HMRC Guidelines in particular the advice to be found here that explains that **“It's your responsibility to correctly determine the employment status of your workers - that is, whether they're employed by you or self-employed. This depends on the terms and conditions of your working relationship with each worker. It's important to get your workers' employment status right because it affects the way tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) are calculated for them. And it determines whether or not you have to operate PAYE (Pay As You Earn) on their earnings.”**

Read full details here

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/payee/employees/start-leave/status.htm>

2. **Merge** the Director's posts for Adults & Children's Service

3. **Delete** the Deputy Director of Children's Service post.

4. **Merge** the above Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive Directorates Posts; and reconfigure Assistant Director posts to release savings.

5. **Reconfigure** PHR Directorate by reducing the number of AD posts.

6. **Review the salaries for Directors and Assistant Directors** with a view to restricting them to a ceiling of no more than **£100,000 p.a.** (the salary of a social worker is around £33,000 p.a.).

7. **Delete** Enforcement and Operations manager post.

8. Implement the **savings** suggested by UNISON and use the money **to save frontline** posts, such as (no particular order) social worker posts, Sheltered Wardens, Youth workers, the Barnet Garden Project or Children's Centres workers or training and development posts.

9. Without any dialogue on any of our recommendations outlined above, **UNISON is opposed** to all job cuts and service reductions.