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25 March 2009

Dear Colleague

RE: Future Shape consultation

I am writing to you with an update on the Future Shape consultation.

Quite a few members have asked why there has been so little reported as compared with Phase One.

The reason is really simple. There has been nothing to report because we have not had anything concrete to report back to members. Very little has been provided and the 7 Future Shape Groups (FSG) are only now producing material. You can view all the reports on our website here <http://www.barnetunison.me.uk/?q=node/226> . If you want hard copies please contact the UNISON office at contactus@barnetunison.org.uk or ring on 0208 359 2088/2090. The Councils intranet should have all the work plans, minutes of each FSG for staff to read.

We would encourage staff to take some time to read the updates from the Group Leaders.

For those who thought silence meant the Future Shape programme was going away I can report that it is still here and meetings are taking place.

Seven Future Shape Groups have been set up. Unfortunately despite our requests the Trade Unions are not part of these groups. It means that we are going to have to conduct our consultation second hand which is not best practice. We have raised this in a meeting with Councillors.

We have requested meetings with all the Group Leads and have asked that all work plans and data provided to the Groups are provided to the Trade Unions. Unfortunately we are having to play 'catch up' because some of the groups have already started.

What we need from you

We recognised that nothing stands still and we need to make sure our services and staff are fit for the future challenges. We are working closely with

Professor Dexter Whitfield who was part of the Newcastle success story (for details please contact the branch office).

We have devised Four Groups with a set of common questions and some questions specific for the each group. We recognise that our members have a breadth of knowledge and expertise which we want to use to help develop our/your proposals for the Future of Council Services.

Clearly it is difficult for some staff to attend meetings, which is why we are conducting this consultation. Please take some time to look at the questions and see if you are able to provide some responses and perhaps other questions and ideas. We have provided a Pre-paid envelope for you to reply. You can be assured that your contributions will be anonymised. We want to give an opportunity for the Trade Unions to table a report which reflects the input of our members to councillors on 8 June Cabinet Committee.

We can see only too well what sort of proposals can happen without staff involvement (read Essex flyer). The report going to 8 June Cabinet will identify perhaps clusters of services packaged together for particular models. Talk to your work colleagues if it helps provide a response, no service is immune to Future Shape; it doesn't matter if you work in children's, adults, resources, corporate governance, housing, environment. Essex is a stark reminder of that.

Team meetings

Add Future Shape to the Agenda for your team meetings. It really is important that as many of our members respond to this consultation. Take responsibility to bring information from the FSGs to the meeting and discuss it with your colleagues. Some of the work of the Groups will have a direct impact on your service and the work you do.

FREE Training opportunities

In the current economic climate, increasing employment it is clear we all need to make sure we have up to date training/qualifications. We are enclosing a questionnaire which we would like all our members to complete.

I look forward to receiving your comments. The deadline for responses to this consultation is Tuesday 21 April 2009.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JDB' followed by a checkmark-like flourish.

John Burgess
Branch Secretary

Council and other public services in Barnet?

3. Do you think there is scope for Barnet Council to establish shared services projects with other London Boroughs?

4. What are the political and economic advantages and disadvantages of shared services projects?

Group 4

Harnessing technology to improve service delivery

1. What is the scope for introducing new technology to improve service delivery?

2. What impact will these changes have on the organisation of work, working practice, staffing levels and accommodation needs?

3. Do you think the ideas for the application of new technology being discussed in the Council's Future Shape group are workable?

YOU decide which Group and questions you want to contribute to.

You can send in your views, contributions by email to

contactus@barnetunison.org.uk or return your comments in the pre paid envelope provided in the letter you received from the branch.



barnet residents & staff working together to secure a better future for public services



Barnet staff



What Future for Council Services?

We are now in the **Second phase** of the Future Shape consultation.
A report will be presented to **Cabinet** on **Monday 8 June 2009**.
We want our members to contribute to the process.

We have devised Four Groups

- 1. Strengthening democratic government and community participation**
- 2. Community need for public services**
- 3. Improved coordination and shared services**
- 4. Harnessing technology to improve service delivery**

We have Common questions for all groups

1. What are your ideas for the future of your service or group of services, taking into account that you will not have access to significant additional resources in the near future?
2. What is the key change which will get your proposals implemented?
– is this better use of existing resources, pooling of budgets, changing the management of service delivery, greater operational freedom for staff and/or organisational change – or something else?

3. What changes are needed in the Council's organisational structure?
4. Consider the inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes for each proposal.

Group 1

Strengthening democratic government and community participation

1. Do you have specific proposals to improve democratic accountability in Barnet to increase community participation in decision-making processes?
2. What should be the main elements of a Community Charter to increase community participation in Barnet?
3. What effect will the Future Shape organisational structure have for democratic accountability and community participation?
4. How can existing arrangements and legislation (for example the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – PCT and Council and the Local Government Act 2007) be used to improve community participation?

Group 2

Community need for public services

1. What effect will a long recession have on the need and demand for public services in Barnet (both Council and other services)?
2. Is there a need for new services which are either not currently provided or provided on a small scale?

3. What are the key improvements that community organisations and the voluntary sector are demanding from the Council?

4. Are there any services or functions which the Council or other public bodies in Barnet do not currently provide but should do so ?

5. Are there any services or functions carried out by the Council and other public bodies in Barnet which could be reduced or terminated?

6. What is the community experience of services which have already been outsourced or externalised to arms length organisations by the Council or other public bodies in Barnet?

Group 3

Improved coordination and shared services

1. What is the scope for better coordination of service delivery between the Council and other public services in Barnet (such the Primary Care Trust, the NHS, Barnet College, the Police, Middlesex University, Jobcentres?)

- Identify the services – are they limited to 'back office services'
- What is the scope for better coordination and integration?
- How can this be achieved and implemented?
- Identify the improvements/benefits which can be achieved?
- Are there any costs/savings?
- Are organisational changes needed?

2. Is there scope for more formal shared service delivery between the

Barnet UNISON Future Shape Feedback form

Name: (Optional)

Service:

Directorate:

YOU decide which Group and questions you want to contribute to. Please send in your response by email **contactus@barnetunison.org.uk** or return your comments in the **Pre paid envelope** provided.

Alternatively, you could discuss Future Shape questions in a team meeting and send a Group response.

Feedback from our members will help contribute to the Trade Union response to Future shape consultation process. If you have **other ideas** which you think we should be looking at please let us know.

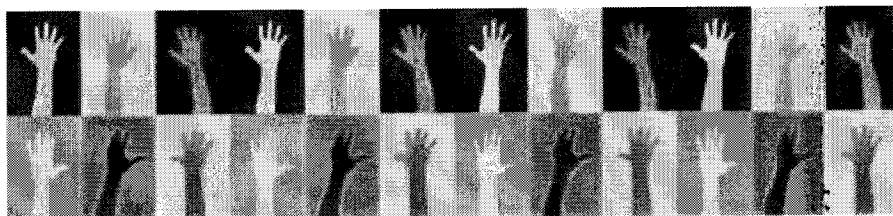
Please read **Flyer** enclosed with this form.

Group 1- Strengthening democratic government and community participation

Group 2 - Community need for public services

Group 3. Improved coordination and shared services

Group 4. Harnessing technology to improve service delivery



barnet residents & staff working together to secure a better future for public services

**ESSEX
COUNTY
UNISON**

Emergency Community Bulletin No. 1

The public service trade union

The leader of Essex County Council, Lord Hanningfield wants to put Essex County services up for sale.

It's not just a little bit here or there - it could be any service from social care to environmental services.

The official advert asks private companies to provide "any and all council services".

Over eight years, the sale could add up to a £5.4 billion bonanza for private companies!

This is the economics of the madhouse.

The council have just had to cancel their contract for IT - it didn't work! Why on earth launch straight into more private contracts?

Trade union members keep these vital services running - now we need the help of the public to stop the County Council's mad plans.



Essex County Council

**CLOSING DOWN SALE
ALL JOBS AND
SERVICES MUST GO!**

Interested fat cats and privatisers
should apply to Lord Hanningfield,
County Hall, Chelmsford

**...YOUTH SERVICE....RECYCLING...
CONSUMER ADVICE.....LIBRARIES...
SOCIAL SERVICES...HIGHWAYS...
...EDUCATION...**

Council to Privatise 'any and all' services

- Council 'smuggled' plans past staff and councillors
- Sell-off due in April
- No answers to trade union concerns and questions
- Contracts could be up to 12 years
- Are your services safe?

- Sign our petition
- Write to the media, your councillor and MP
- Tell your friends and neighbours about this threat to our services

**Join the campaign-
Contact Unison on
01245 354044**

Our Services - not safe in their hands

Lord Hanningfield says his plans will 'transform' Essex and save £200 million.

He's already likely to lose up to £120 million because of the disaster of his IT 'partnership' with BT - why should anyone believe his new scheme will save money?

The noble lord seems to think he can do as he likes. He didn't care about the rules or other staff when he offered a job to a runner-up from 'The Apprentice' without going through the same recruitment process as everyone else.

If you're one of Alan Sugar's cast-offs,

Hanningfield will give you a job to get publicity. If you're a service user or a council worker, he'll sell your service to the highest bidder.

Essex County Council is the first local authority in the country to put all its services out to tender.

Nearly a million residents and 6,500 council workers face the decimation of our services and jobs. All because the council are determined to allow private contractors to put profit first.

The council need to know that we will not put up with this attack.

Remember Excelcare?

Essex County Council sold off their old people's homes to Excelcare.

They said the service for the elderly would be safe.

The new company closed homes and dispersed elderly and vulnerable staff at short notice.

Some of the staff who were transferred to Excelcare were sacked and are still fighting their case through the courts!

That's the real face of privatisation. Don't let Essex get it away with it again.

When dinosaurs rule the earth...

In the 1970s, Tory politician Nicholas Ridley came up with a plan for the 'enabling council'. This was the idea that councils should meet once a year, decide on the private sector contracts to deliver their services, and go home again.

Thatcherism should be dead in the water - we all know what happens when vital services like the railways are left to the private sector to mismanage.

Lord Hanningfield is a Thatcherite dinosaur pursuing a Stone Age political agenda.

There's no evidence that Essex County Council's services are inefficient, indeed quite the opposite. Councils are required to become more efficient every year.

Hanningfield's plans have nothing to do with improving services and everything to do with a discredited political dogma.



Return2Learn

Dear staff member,

My name is Susan Timthong, I am Barnet Unison's Lifelong Learning Coordinator working on your behalf under Barnet Unison's / Barnet Councils Learning Partnership Agreement signed in 2005. My role is to set up, coordinate and run FREE ICT, Communication Skills and ESOL training courses for staff, promote Skills for life and Return2Learn programmes and support and encourage staff development. Since 2005, through Return2Learn, we have trained over 400 staff. To enable me to fully support staff to access FREE training, I need to know what training staff want, what training staff have had and if staff have encountered difficulties in accessing training. I would appreciate your help and ask you to fill out the short questionnaire below and return it in the enclosed pre-paid envelope. Please be assured, your answers are confidential and anonymity will be maintained in the use of information.

Many thanks for your help.

Susan Timthong

Susan Timthong

Cut here.....

What is your job title? _____

Which Service area do you work for? _____

How long have you worked for/on behalf of Barnet Council? _____

What training have you received over the past 2 years? (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary) _____

Have you attended any of the following Return2Learn training courses (please tick):

Communication Skills ____

ITC ____

ESOL ____

Have you had difficulties accessing training? (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

