



UNISON

Accommodation

Survey

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Appendix 1: Raw Data

1.0 Background:

1.1 At a Branch Meeting on the 8th June members of Barnet UNISON requested that UNISON contact Management for urgent discussions about the planned move to Barnet House this September. In order to represent members' concerns and issues accurately to management, it was agreed at that meeting that a survey should be sent out to all UNISON members in Barnet, asking them for their opinions on the move. This survey was duly emailed to all members on the 15th June, for completion by the 19th June.

This report is based about the qualitative responses captured in question 'E' of that survey: 'Do you have anything else to add?'

2.0 Methodology:

2.1 An Excel spreadsheet was emailed from Barnet UNISON, listing all the comments given by staff to all the questions in the survey. No other information was shared apart from the 'naked' comments. For this aspect of the work, only answers to question E were analysed. So all these responses were copied and pasted into a new excel work book within Column 1. Each answer was read and their key points briefly summarised in an adjoining Column 2. From analysing these using a framework method, emergent themes arose and were categorised in Column 3. As new themes arose, a new heading or main issue was created alongside that point in Column 3. All comments were then linked together using colour coding to their corresponding headings. So for example, for all staff that mentioned issues around efficiency, their comments were coded grey, so they could be linked to their heading Efficiency. Interestingly enough, while some comments did cover several themes this did not occur often as only specific points of concern/issues were mostly raised by staff. When more than one point was raised per comment, the main idea was covered under its main heading or issue, and the lesser ones noted under its relevant theme as a separate point. So, subsidiary arguments were not ignored. Data saturation did occur within the data set for Question E as points were repeated. Once all the main headings were linked to the supporting arguments, views were then summarised and supported with verbatim quotes. While views were categorised or written as single entities, they were not necessarily exclusive, as some

overlapped. So for example, views on Public Transport are closely related to concerns around Efficiency and Work-life Balance.

2.2 From the comments by staff it was possible to gain insight into potential issues that they may not have considered or been aware of, for they were not stated in their response. So to separate these from issues specifically mentioned by staff, they are recorded as 'Salient Issues'.

3.0 Limitations:

3.1 The people who responded were those who were more likely to be adversely affected by the move. This tended to be non-essential car users and those who do not drive to work or use their cars for work. Fewer comments were received from them.

4.0 The Findings summarised:

4.1 Staff, on the whole, were very dissatisfied with the consultation process. They felt that this exercise was another example of an ill thought through, short-sighted project by management. Feelings around management not respecting them, or caring enough about them, were prevalent. The move was also seen as another attack on staff terms and conditions.

4.2 Working effectively and being efficient at work was, without a doubt, a concern for many members of staff. This was reflected not only in the longer time it would take to travel to work and carry out visits using public transport, but also in terms of its detrimental effect on the quality of service provided through increased stress levels. Staff concerns around management needing to revise work allocations, primarily through increased travelling times incurred using public transport and limited parking facilities, requested this be reflected in performance indicators.

4.3 Public transport, on the whole, was not deemed by most staff to be a viable alternative to driving to work. These views were echoed not only among non-essential car users, but also by essential car users. Both groups felt it would take longer travelling by public transport than travelling by car. Issues around safety after late visits, the safe transit of client documentation, underlying health needs, were also cited as reasons for why public transport is not really a viable alternative to driving.

4.4 Non-essential car users, while appreciating that it would cause disruptions to residents, are on the whole, still prepared to drive to work but park off-site in residential areas. This again ties in with the commonly held view that a car is essential for travelling to work, and for the effective implementation of work duties. Also, public transport is believed to be costly, especially if one lives miles away from work or has a minimal bus route near home. Driving to work was also deemed less stressful than commuting. Some staff, while not registered disabled, felt unable, for health reasons, to commute and so needed to drive.

4.5 Staff felt that there was insufficient recognition or appreciation by management that most people drive to work. The need to drive did not just connect with the need to do the job, but also staff's work-life balance. Family life was stated as a reason for needing a car and the move would have a detrimental effect on this.

4.5 Future moves to Edgware, Hendon and Colindale and their effects on parking, are already causing disquiet among some staff, because these areas are known to have even worse parking restrictions than Barnet House.

4.6 The salient themes to emerge, while not specifically articulated, were around disability, data protection and health and safety. Some staff have disabilities which management may not be aware of, and so favour travelling to work by car. The matter of data protection breaches was also mentioned indirectly, because at the moment notes made during visits are written-up in cars and not on public transport. Issues about health and safety at work for those who visit out of hours and have late appointments, and were therefore reliant upon their cars to take them home safely afterwards, emerged as latent themes.

5.0 Findings:

From analysing the comments, they could be categorised these headings (main issues):

- **The Consultation Process/Management**
- **Efficiency**
- **Public Transport**
- **Non-Essential Car Users**
- **Essential Car users**
- **Work Life Balance**
- **My Future in Barnet Council**
- **Future Office Moves**
- **General, Non-Specific Comments**
- **Salient Issues**

5.1 The Consultation Process/Management:

5.1a Most staff had the most to say about the consultation process by management on the move. It was felt that they were not properly consulted, and some could not even be consulted because of staffing issues at work. It was generally perceived as another ill thought through, badly planned exercise by management, with little thought for staff or their feelings on the matter. Sadly, of all those who commented, they felt that the planned move merely showed another lack of respect for staff by management, many of whom having given many years of service to Barnet ending up being disparaged by them and Capita.

5.1b Other aspects to comments in this area were around management eroding staff's terms and conditions, coupled with demotivating them, and the detrimental effect, which should be known to management that it will have on staff retention and recruitment. This again links into concerns around a lack of respect from management and Capita towards existing staff.

"The move is scheduled for August, less than three months away yet the parking and other potential issues appear to have come as a complete surprise to the 'organisation'! Surely work on addressing this major issue should have been begun some considerable time ago to attempt to produce a logical and thought out solution that's fair to all parties rather than what will almost certainly be an imposed 'top down' solution!"

“We were meant to attend a briefing on the move, however due to drastic understaffing...training and casework, several of us have been unable to find cover to attend”

“I have 33 years service with local government been in Barnet since 1996 and feel that staff are not being respected”.

5.2 Efficiency:

5.2a This question resulted in a plethora of responses centred on issues of work inefficiencies as a result of limiting parking to essential car users only. Staff concerns about the negative impact such a decision will have on their work performance and service delivery should be applauded as it reflects dedication to providing a good service and caring about service users.

5.2b The most cited concerns lay around issues of increased journey times and perceived wasted time on public transport when they could be at work or on visits. Overall, staff felt that having longer travelling time would lessen the time spent working. They were anxious that this be reflected in work allocations, and performance indicators. So for example, rotas and visits would have to be less often to accommodate time spent on public transport. Issues around increased noise levels with more staff per unit area, less meeting room space, and generally feeling less comfortable, is also believed will negatively affect productivity at Barnet House.

5.2c The variety of concerns raised about efficiency was considerable. Within many of the categories for concerns about the move are: increases in stress for staff through having to commute to work; some staff living many miles from Barnet and the increased journey times using public transport; not being able to fulfil the full requirements of their JD through not being able to carry out as many visits, especially not at unsociable hours, if it meant having to commute home afterwards.

5.2d The interesting scenario of needing a car for a morning visit, then needing to take it home because they cannot park at work, then commute back to work for the rest of the day was raised. And some non-essential car users use their car on a daily basis and would therefore need parking.

5.3e It was also suggested that it would be far more efficient to provide better work environments and space per staff member, including parking, instead of relying on measures like homeworking, in order to monitor work and produce a more effective/coordinated response to emergencies at work.

5.3f The overall negative impact on productivity limiting parking to essential users only was well voiced.

'To do my job effectively, to fit in my visits obviously best to have a car, so without the car I will get less done for Barnet as it will take longer to get around the borough.'

'A short sighted policy which...cannot park at NLBP will result in huge inefficiencies. Getting to appointments on public transport is simply not an option'.

'Have Barnet ever considered that providing individual desks and less home working, besides being less Stressful, may actually increase efficiency, accountability and also allow for sufficient workers to be available for urgent situations, as for Parking...'

5.3 Public Transport:

5.3a Very closely linked to concerns about efficiency was public transport, which by its very name and purpose, is designed to cater for all needs, and not necessary bespoke ones. So while some staff said that they could travel to work by public transport, and indeed it was good to encourage less driving, on the whole this possibility was not welcomed or deemed a practical alternative for most staff. The greatest concerns lay in the time that it takes to use public transport, especially if your work involves travelling around the borough and working late. Concerns included the need to commute long distances to get to work with limited local transport and having a school run to do so greatly increasing the time it takes to get to Barnet. The increased cost of using it was also mentioned. Train and tube fares are expensive, especially if you do not live locally. The impact on local services with more staff using it was also voiced. Issues around not being able to make notes on public transport between visits were also highlighted but will be looked at more closely under the heading Salient Issues.

'If I cannot use my car for work activities, I will spend more of my working day travelling by public transport.'

'I live 20 miles away so it is essential for me to drive to work and travelling by public transport would take another 2 hours to get to work as I have to drop my daughter at school and there are no buses running until 10am and I would have to take 3 buses.'

'I will have to travel in by train and walk; or try and work from home once a week; or work in a Barnet cafe once a week. We should be encouraged to drive less'.

5.4 Non-Essential Car Users:

5.4a Non-essential car users who, according to current planning, will not be expected to park at Barnet House, are prepared to park locally in residential areas (park off-site). Using public transport as a means of getting to work instead of driving is possible for some staff. Others welcomed the encouragement to drive less. Some reminded us that not all staff are affected by the parking issues at Barnet House. For some, the possibility of considering alternative methods of working because of limited parking and possibly office space was not a reality because their work involved face to face contact with the public. The overall consensus was that if non-essential car users still drive to work but park in residential areas, if they cannot park at Barnet House, will have a negative impact on residents, and staff appreciate they would not be welcomed. Which shows that for some, a car is essential for work purposes, regardless of whether management consider them to be essential car users or not. The latter is echoed in comments about needing to park at work, on site, because of health reasons. This point will be raised again under Salient Issues.

'I will continue to drive to work by car but the impact will be on local residents as I will need to park on surrounding streets'.

'I drop my kids to school most mornings so cannot take public transport and get to work on time so I will have to continue to drive and park off-site'.

'But it will take such a long time to get to work, and with recent health concerns would prefer to drive'

5.5 Essential Car Users

5.5a This group has been identified by management as needing to park at Barnet House, and so would be allocated a space. While this group realises that they have been earmarked as those requiring parking, there was still a sense that perhaps they won't be able to park because of the limited parking there and that the council did indeed need to make sure that they could park near the office. There was also the opinion that if management does not recognise the need for essential car users, then staff should not use their car for work purposes.

'The council could allow essential users to have parking permits to allow parking in nearby streets to alleviate the potential problems'.

5.6 Work Life Balance

5.6a Concerns around work life balance were raised as a direct result of the move, in particular the lack of real choice about whether to drive or not, and no viable alternative like working from home. Most car drivers were adamant that they needed to drive to work. Some gave no reasons for being so adamant. Others were clear in articulating that they had no wish to work from home because they wanted to separate their work life from their home life. Again these needs were somewhat underpinned by the findings for Public Transport /Non-Essential Car Users in the increased time that it would take travelling to work, and its effect on personal time and family commitments.

'I personally do not wish to work from home, I like to keep work and home activities separate...'

5.7 Future Office Moves

5.7a While not specially targeted in this survey, staff are already concerned about the future planned moves and the lack of information on these moves and speculation about some moves. While it was not clear if staff were referring to the same site but to different sites, what was plain was the level of concern about such moves on parking. So the move to Colindale and possibly Hendon (these could be the same move) or Hendon as a separate move (the Hendon move is deemed a plausible rumour), is already raising concerns about parking problems. Similar disquiet centred on the proposed 'Edgware Move'. So staff also took this opportunity to say how difficult it would be travelling and probably parking there.

'I live local to NLBP...concerned once we will move to the new premises in Edgware in 2017 as there is already a lot of traffic congestion and not aware if there will be parking facility'.

'It is not so much this move but the one to Colindale as there will be a very large CPZ'.

'Our move to Hendon is a rumour. No one had told us anything about where we are moving too'.

5.8 My Future in Barnet

5.8a Restricted parking or no parking for some, proved influential in making staff evaluate and think about whether to stay, or continue working for Barnet. Some planned to stay, because their overall economic circumstance forbade serious employment alternatives at the moment. Some felt that not being able to park at work was just another example of Barnet not really

being concerned enough about staff retention and recruitment, while some saw the detrimental effects of not being able to park as necessitating thinking towards leaving. Not being able to park your car at work was also seen by some as another example of Barnet not respecting or giving due consideration to the needs of their staff. This topic was very emotive, because of the impact that it had in causing staff to reflect on their years in service, current situation and the value that the organisation appears not to have for them. Of significance was the fact that parking has always been provided and just to remove it without knowledge/understanding of its impact was mentioned. Without a doubt, the need to park one's car at work is very important.

'The use of a car is essential for me to continue to work'.

'...I cannot continue to work for an organisation that treats people like they are nobodies. My advice to people would be to get out while you can. Go and work for an organisation that knows how to respect people'.

'I would be able to continue working for Barnet....'.

'I may have to look for work elsewhere'.

'... I am very upset about the parking. I really don't know how I will be able to do my work. I have worked on and off for LBB for xxx years and this is the result. Very sad.'

'... I also will not be able to continue working for Barnet if the parking facilities (or time spent searching for non-existent spaces - given the massive proposed reduction in numbers of parking spaces) result in either of the following: - my having a further effective loss in take home pay because of added expenses related to parking...'

'... As an employer that have always provided some sort of parking facility they should have something in place to accommodate staff needs, especially those that need to travel into Barnet'.

5.9 General/Non-Specific Comments

5.9a There were a few comments that appeared tangential to main heading and themes, but to be fair to the respondents, should nevertheless be mentioned: One related to this survey not changing anything, and the other, laptop problems.

'I think this survey is far too late and will not change anything'.

'I have always had problems seeing small detail. The current desk mounted computer screens are just manageable, but reading small print causes eye strain. The lap-tops are therefore beyond my comfortable use except for just a few minutes'.

6.0 Salient Issues

6.0a One of the themes to emerge from the analysis was that of disabilities. Some staff drive to work because of physical or mental health impairments. These may not be known to the employer, because previously these colleagues have more or less been guaranteed a parking space and so felt nothing needed to be shared. It is doubtful their needs have been considered in the allocation of car spaces, with the emphasis on essential car users only. Similarly, under disability legislation, employees don't have to disclose the nature of their disability, but may now feel the need to say something. An issue of health and safety also arose for non-essential car users visiting clients out of hours.

6.0b And finally, data protection: staff make notes about their visits in their cars. These notes are therefore done in private. There were therefore concerns about making notes about clients on public transport.

7.0 Summary:

7.0a The qualitative responses to Question E were extremely well thought through, frank and honest. It was very clear that those who answered were fully engaged with the aims of the survey, and felt that they could speak and were going to be listened to; there was a level of trust in their speech between them and the Union.

8.0 Conclusion:

8.0a Most staff had concerns about the move to Barnet House and the negative impact that the increased journey time, using public transport, would have on their personal time and work efficiency. So although the survey was aimed primarily at non-essential car users, as they were not prioritised as essential car users, most car users are still very concerned about the limited parking at Barnet House. Concerns were also expressed about service delivery and visits, especially those carried out at late hours. Other issues were expressed like those about health and not feeling up to a commute, personal safety if working out of hours, and the overall increases in stress on the individual and work around commuting. Most felt that they would

have to continue to drive to work and find somewhere to park. They had concerns about having to park residentially. For them, the option to use other methods of transport were not realistic primarily because of limited local transport, work-life balance, or cost considerations. Issues around planned future moves and even more restrictions were evidenced as already causing anxiety among staff.

8.0b From the comments, while some could change their method of transport to work, most staff are very dissatisfied with the move and the consultation process employed to introduce it, as few staff are able to travel in by public transport or feel able to use it for their jobs as the next best alternative. So drawing a mark between non-essential and essential car users as a means of determining priority for parking is neither wise nor fair, but should only be treated as a starting point for in-depth discussions around not only business needs but also the personal needs of all staff.

9 Recommendations:

9.1 *The consultation process/Management.* This was overall seen as poor and not inclusive of most staff affected by the move.

9.1a It is recommended that Management continue to engage with staff about the move, but more meaningfully, and ensure that all teams affected by the move have a chance to discuss the changes. So the dates of any meetings will need to vary to allow most staff a chance to attend. These invites should not be dependent upon staff attending set meetings, or the managers disseminating any information that they wish to share at team meetings, but also take on the form of general emails from Change Managers and SMT.

9.1b The benefits of this recommendation would be to ensure that staff are kept up to date with information on the move. This would make them feel that management are listening and are in tune with their feelings prior to making any decisions about parking and office space. This would also address staff concerns about this just being another briefing exercise posing as a consultation. Better communication would also facilitate better well-being, inform personal decision making and alleviate stress.

9.2 *Efficiency.* Staff are very concerned about the negative impact that the move will have on their work efficiency, in terms of service delivery and the allocation of work, due to the increased time that it will take to make visits, and travel to and from work. The measures management intend to employ to deal with this issue are not known at this moment.

9.2a It is recommended that carefully thought through measures be put in place by management to deal with staff concerns about inefficiency. These measures must be seen to address staff concerns and should be clearly documented and understood in recognition of the change to work patterns.

9.2b The benefit to staff would be a reflection in their work load that is not detrimental to them. Performance indicators would also need to reflect these changes in service delivery.

9.3 *Public Transport.* Central to the move is the possibility that public transport is a viable option. Staff on the whole do not see the increased use of public transport as a feasible way forward on business delivery and personal time because of the drastic increases in travelling time.

9.3a It is recommended that management work with staff to consider agreed alternative parking solutions, as the best solution appears to be able to drive to work and park safely and affordably, if not at work then somewhere nearby.

9.3b The benefits of having local parking facilities, able to meet the needs of those who need to drive to work for personal and business purposes, will be in terms of efficiency, and not having to re-rota work schedules or address performance indicators to reflect new travelling times. Management will also benefit in terms of showing that they have listened and understood the needs of their staff, and it would also act as a deterrent to those considering leaving Barnet and be of benefit when recruiting new staff.

9.4 *Non-essential Car Users:* This group is naturally by far the worst affected by the move to Barnet House, and is the group most affected by the proposed alternatives of using public transport and mobile working.

9.4a It is recommended that adequate, suitable parking or useful parking solutions be found to address this group's needs. These would most probably come from a 'bottom-up', approach, as opposed to a 'top-down approach' led by management.

9.4b The benefit would result in a continuity of service levels, as currently exist. It would also address staff concerns around family life, emotional well-being, and health. As this group is conceivably much larger than 'essential car users', any detrimental effect on them will no doubt have a significant impact on the service delivery, so the benefits of addressing their needs seriously is beneficial to all.

9.5 *Essential Car Users*: This group are those ear-marked by management as needing to park for business purposes. Although recognised as needing a parking space at work, they were not entirely convinced that they would be able to park conveniently, or at all, because of restricted car spaces.

9.5a It is recommended that in order to alleviate their concerns, and facilitate key services, management will need to consider adequate parking needs for this group in the same way that they need to consider the parking needs for non-essential users.

9.5b The benefit would be to continue having them deliver services, mostly front line, and minimise their stress levels.

9.6 *Work-Life Balance*: The effects of having to consider alternative means of transport, and alternative working arrangements to address this, all contribute negatively to existing work-life balance.

9.6a It is recommended that, since work-life balance is very personal and unique to the individual, it would be advantageous for management to seriously consider staff parking needs, as they will leave if they cannot balance their personal and work commitments effectively.

9.6b The benefits of doing this would be service continuity and no marked revisions to decisions already in place.

9.7 *Future Office Moves*. Some staff cited more concerns about proposed future moves in terms of limited parking. These staff saw future moves to sites other than Barnet House as having even worse parking problems

9.7a It is recommended that Management learn from the move to Barnet House and seriously consider the parking needs of all their staff in advance. As Colindale is a work in progress, it would be beneficial for them to revise their plans for parking to ensure that it includes the parking needs of most staff. If this cannot be done as plans are too far advanced, then they should start considering alternative off-site parking which is agreeable to staff, affordable, easy to find and safe to park in.

9.7b The benefits would be to have something in place that is acceptable to staff and management, well ahead of the move. This would benefit staff retention.

9.8 *My Future in Barnet.* The move to Barnet House and the loss of parking for non-essential car users caused some staff to consider their future in Barnet Council.

9.8a It is recommended that management deliver sensible parking solutions that are acceptable to staff.

9.8b The benefit to management of addressing this issue sensibly will be in terms of staff retention and staff recruitment. It will also help lessen the disengagement between management and staff.