

Trade Union Consultation Meeting

Wednesday, 15 February 2023, 10.30am, Microsoft Teams

Decision Notes and Actions Arising

Attendees LBE

Julie Mimmagh, Chair
Shemelia Lewis, Note Taker

Presenting Officers:

Brett Leahy
Irene Papasavva
Padmini Patel
Bridgette Cowley
Zhensheng Chen
Ivana Price
Felicia Ferraro
Cigdem Alkan
Flora Stevens

Trade Unions

Paul Bishop (Unison)
Anna Woodcock (GMB)
Christine Sesstein (Unison)
Denise Handscomb-Teagle (GMB)

Apologies

Nick Long (Unite)
Tracey Adnan (Unison)
Helen Finnemore (LBE)

		OWNER
1.	Development Management Service Restructure	
	<p><i>Brett Leahy / Irene Papasavva / Padmini Patel presented</i></p> <p>Aim to make the service financially self-sufficient to create stability, continuity, and resilience. The Council faces substantial budget pressures, the Development Management Service will make its contribution to meeting this challenge by reducing its spend by at least £150k pa.</p> <p>There is a national shortage of planners and planning enforcement officers.</p> <p>The number of planning applications in progress in Enfield is much higher than it needs to be and this brings 'failure demand' from service users chasing progress and making complaints, slow service and unnecessary additional challenging workloads for teams.</p> <p>There is currently too many layers of management which causes confusion with officers about relative responsibilities of these different layers and report that decision-making is slowed, by the need for multiple layers of authorisation. At the same time, the high level of applications in process are more than can be reduced by the planners in post at their current productivity – so there are too few planners for the short-term.</p> <p>The proposed changes for; Head of Development Management, Operational Support Manager & Land Charges, 2x Senior Technical Support Officers and 2x Technical Support Officers are at risk however, if not assimilated, will be invited to apply for new roles on a ringfenced process. Recruitment to these new roles will be through an interview process.</p> <p>11 posts will be deleted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Head of Development Management HOS2 • 2x Planning decision Manager MM2 	

- 1x Principal Planning Officer MM1
- 1x Senior Planning Officer PO1
- 1x Senior Enforcement Officer PO1
- 1x Operational Support Manager & Land Charges MM2
- 2x Senior Technical Support Officer SO2
- 2x Technical Support Officer SC5

9 Posts will be created:

- 1x Head of Technical Support, Planning & Growth HOS1
- 2x Team Leader, Technical support PO1
- 2x Lead Technical Support Officer SO1
- 4x Technical Support Officers SC6

The Technical Support Officer Sc5 roles have been re-evaluated and moved to grade Sc6 based on generic template job descriptions.

Questions:

CS asked how long will it take to develop someone to become an efficient planner? BL responded once the restructure is in place, we can begin implementation. Some Technical officers are already high performing and keen to do the work within their own initiative. CS asked are you confident that they will be able to fulfil duties and become qualified and are you creating a big training programme? BL responded no, some less qualified planners are already doing the required work within their roles and have the ability to gain the qualifications. This will be part of their career development opportunities. The service currently has 6 planning apprentices that study with South Bank University and this is something that can be made available.

PB asked what would stop the people from leaving once you have developed them? BL responded that this a challenge for all local authorities at the moment, we will first tackle it by getting rid of the backlog of 1800 applications. This will decrease the workload therefore improving the wellbeing of all staff. The service acknowledges the fact that staff make decisions about their place of work based on how they feel, work/life balance and if their mental health is being considered. We are working towards creating a better work/life balance to keep staff motivated in their roles as this has been seen in other local authorities such as Redbridge.

PB asked why is the service losing money? BL responded we are not offering a service. Local government planning departments are underfunded but Central government are looking to increase planning fees so that costs are recovered via planning applications. As the department has a large backlog, there a number of complaints which in turn affects other services that we offer but are not delivering on. PB asked if the service plans on hiring temporary staff to get rid of the backlog? BL responded yes; this is part of the restructure proposal.

CS asked will the existing sc5 posts be assimilated to the sc6 posts? IP responded that we are looking at re-evaluating rather than assimilating the roles as it is a development of their duties. All JD's have been written and evaluated. CS asked when will the consultation start? BL responded that it will start the week commencing the 27th February.

	<p>CS asked if the staff member at risk is aware that their posts will be deleted? BL responded that this will be part of the consultation and will have a one-to-one conversation with that individual as it is a sensitive matter.</p> <p>Actions: Send the names of the affected staff to TU colleagues</p> <p>TU's had no objections to proceeding</p>	BL
2.	Temporary Accommodation/Council Rents Team restructure	
	<p><i>Bridgette Cowley / Zhensheng Chen presented</i></p> <p>Due to the current cost of living crisis, more tenants are falling into rent arrears and need support from the Council. We are also in the process of changing the housing system to Cx which will require more system testing and training to the officers. To fully support the teams, we are proposing to recruit 2 team leaders (PO2), with one for Council Housing team and one for TA team.</p> <p>We anticipate the existing 5 officers (SO2) within the 2 teams will be in a strong position to successfully apply and we are aware that they have expressed their interests to the these positions. To reduce the increase of staffing cost, we are proposing to delete the two SO2 posts once the two PO2 posts have been appointed so the additional cost would be the difference between the top grade of SO2 and the bottom grade of PO2. Currently there is a vacant scale 6 post in Temporary Accommodation team, we are therefore proposing to delete this post to finance the additional cost occurred.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>PB asked is recruitment running normally now? JM All recruitment requests were taken to EMT due to the budget review. Some recruitment was delayed but majority still went ahead but now that part of the approval process has been lifted. With the new recruitment system in place, there are more checks and balances in place and all recruitment requests are signed off by the Finance Lead to ensure there is budget for the post.</p> <p>Anna asked if the Sc6 post that is being deleted putting an individual at risk? BC responded that this post is vacant but we are keen to keep this post open so it can potentially fund the restructure and the creation of the two PO2 posts.</p> <p>CS asked if the service confident that there will be enough staff to support the work being done in the service as there is a loss of staff? ZC responded that the two SO2 staff will apply for the PO2 posts so there will only be one vacant post the service will lose. Those SO2 staff are already taking on extra work so that they are competent enough for the PO2 posts. The Sc6 post has been vacant for almost a year so an automated tax service has been created to cover workload so losing this post will not cause any significant impact to the team.</p> <p>Actions: None</p> <p>TU's had no objections to proceeding</p>	
3.	Job Description - Project Manager to support delivery of Family Hubs and Start for Life Services	
	<p><i>Ivana Price presented on behalf of Helen Finnemore</i></p> <p>This proposal has previously been presented on 18th January 2023</p>	

	<p>It is proposed to create 1 fte new fixed term post of Project Manager to support delivery of Family Hubs and Start for Life Services transformation programme of work.</p> <p>We have already appointed to the 1 fte temporary post of Head of Family Hubs and Start for Life transformation programme lead who is responsible for the overall programme delivery. As the programme is gathering momentum, it is essential to boost the transformation infrastructure support.</p> <p>The proposed Project Manager will be responsible for supporting the Head of transformation to mobilise partnership working for all funded elements of the programme of work, including mobilisation and facilitation of agreed programme workstreams and task and finish groups.</p> <p>The anticipated grade of the 1 fte Project Manager is MM2. The actual cost of the post is expected to be within the range of £67,275-£85,693 per year. It is proposed the fixed term post is for 18 months with possible extension to 24 months subject to programme needs.</p> <p>It is proposed to recruit internally in the first instance as we expect there will be a sufficient pool of suitable internal candidates. The role will be offered as a secondment if appropriate.</p> <p>No questions</p> <p>Actions: None</p> <p>TU's had no objections to proceeding</p>	
4.	<p>School and Early Years Improvement Service</p>	
	<p><i>Felicia Ferraro presented</i></p> <p>Two full time SO1 have moved to new roles in other services within the council. Decided to review the service and saw the opportunity to create savings. It is therefore proposed to delete the 2x SO1 posts and replace them with 2x Sc5 posts.</p> <p>No questions</p> <p>Actions: None</p> <p>TU's had no objections to proceeding</p>	
5.	<p>SEN Service (ECASS Team)</p>	
	<p><i>Cigdem Alkan and Flora Stevens presented</i></p> <p>Proposing to create capacity as the service is not currently reaching statutory requirement that the service needs to fulfil. LBE has a wide range of legal statutory duties relating to education and these include under section 13A of the Education 1996 a general duty to promote high standards and fulfilment by every child of their educational potential. The service is accountable to the Excellence Board and the Children's and Young People's Scrutiny Board within the council. Outcomes are measured for academic attainment, attendance, and exclusions. Different groups of pupils are tracked within this cohort, including those with special educational needs, disadvantaged and underperforming ethnic groups.</p>	

	<p>The service currently has two full time SO1 Senior Business Support Officer vacancies. The proposal is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delete the above two full time SO1 Senior Business Support Officers and create two Scale 5 Business Support Officer vacancies; • With the current business support structure, there are two SO1 officers (one which has recently been re-evaluated and graded from a Scale 5 to an SO1 grade), following the formal HR re-evaluation process (back in December 2022); • Therefore, the new structure would consist of two SO1 Senior Business Support Officers and two newly appointed Scale 5 Business Support Officers, which would result in a saving being generated back into the budget. With budgets remaining challenging it would help towards making a saving, whilst not sacrificing any quality of business support to the needs of the service. • The proposal would simply replace 2 x vacant SO1 Senior Business Support Officers with 2 Scale 5 Business Support Officers (please note, there would be no redundancies within this proposal). • Support the team in providing administrative support to other parts of SEYIS and the Education Service. <p>This proposal aims to reduce waiting times for speech and language advice which will be in line with the statutory guidance for children and young people.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>PB asked it is highlighted in the report that there is an exponential growth in the number of EHCP and the Council is above national average, why is that? CA responded at the moment there is a lack of support without early intervention that's been in place since 2014. To combat this, we have created the ECASS team and service and numbers are declining but there is a backlog of several years to support. With early intervention in place and the team's capacity increasing, those numbers should continue to decrease and remain in line with national guidance.</p> <p>CS asked is there any tribunals occurring at the moment? CA responded yes there is and once the two posts are put in place, children and young people can be supported and avoid further tribunals from happening.</p> <p>Actions: None</p> <p>TU's had no objections to proceeding</p>	
6.	Notes of previous meeting, 1st February 2023	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meridian Water consultation has been delayed but will ensure TU staff are invited once it has started. • Send copies of the updated policies to TU staff 	<p>JM</p> <p>JM/KN</p>
7.	Any other business	
	AW - Tracking on vehicles of all staff working at Morson Road is open for abuse on both sides. It would be best to create a policy for the trackers in vehicles so that if anything	

	<p>does go wrong there is a procedure that managers must follow, and they are not treating staff unfairly. CS added There have been occasions where tracker information is being used in disciplinary hearings and it was historically agreed that you cannot raise a disciplinary purely based on tracking information, you must speak to the individual.</p> <p>Actions: Find policy or terms of reference relating to trackers in vehicles and pass information on to TU staff.</p>	JM
	<p style="text-align: center;">Next meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, 1st March 2023 10.30am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Microsoft Teams meeting</p>	