

AGENDA ITEM NO: 4

To : Members of the Human Resources Committee

Councillors : Steve Comer, John Bees, Richard Eddy, Popham,
Negus (subs:)

Copy to : Robert Britton, Service Director, Strategic HR
Will Godfrey, Strategic Director; Resources
Minute Book, DSO, ISO, Spares x 15
Kirstie Macrae,/Graham Clarkson/Linda
Fitton/ Siobhan Burke, relevant report authors.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

19 November 2009

PUBLIC FORUM STATEMENTS

AGENDA ITEM	AUTHOR OF STATEMENT	SUBJECT(S) OF STATEMENT	No.
6 7	UNISON	Business Transformation Programme - Use of Contractors ('interim managers') Payment of Additional Costs for Lower Paid Employees who are Subject to a Compulsory Change in their work location	1
5	UNISON	Implementing of HR Restructuring: Establishment of separate Strategic HR and STS HR Function	2
6 7	UNITE	Business Transformation Programme - Use of Contractors ('interim managers') Payment of Additional Costs for Lower Paid Employees who are Subject to a Compulsory Change in their work location	3

AGENDA ITEM	AUTHOR OF STATEMENT	SUBJECT(S) OF STATEMENT	No.
<p>N/A</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p>	GMB	<p>Monitoring of External Contracts</p> <p>Business Transformation Programme - Use of Contractors ('interim managers')</p> <p>Payment of Additional Costs for Lower Paid Employees who are Subject to a Compulsory Change in their work location</p>	4
6	Chair and Joint Secretary of JERB (Joint Employee Relations Board)	Business Transformation Programme - Use of Contractors ('interim managers')	5

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2009****COMMENTS OF UNISON****AGENDA ITEM 6:- “BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME
– USE OF CONTRACTORS (INTERIM
MANAGERS)”**

UNISON is concerned by the lack of detailed information contained in the report of the Service Director (Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy).

Whilst the TU side to the recent Joint Employee Relations Board (JERB) requested full details of the costs to the authority of employing Consultants, UNISON as a member of the JERB had expected to see individual breakdowns containing the following information:-

1. No. of Consultants in Each Department.
2. “Project Work” that the Consultants are undertaking
3. Commencement date of appointment of Consultants
4. Length/ anticipated duration of the project
5. Cost of Consultant.

The report under Appendix “A” indicate that the cost this year to the authority of employing Consultants will be around £1.3 million. /this is a reduction in previous years expenditure where it ranged between £3 million and £5 million. Had Appendix “A” highlighted the full picture as defined in points 1 – 5 above, then UNISON’s comments would have been more positive.

UNISON is also deeply concerned of the continuing practice of employee external Agency Staff in order to cover for vacant posts in departments. A classic example of this is that in Neighbourhoods Department, an agency staff has been employed for over 4 years in the post of “Senior Housing Advisor (Estate Management)”. The grading of this post is BG9. Similarly, there are many other posts like this one where agency staff are being employed to cover the vacancy. UNISON holds the view that there is no logical reason for maintaining the use of agency staff in posts such as this, when coming at a time where there are large scale job losses across the authority brought on by departmental reviews. UNISON is deeply concerned that the City Council continues to employ Consultants and Agency Staff as “stop gap measures”, when these positions could easily be filled by staff who face displacement from their post as a result of these reviews.

The report indicates that the number of Consultants being employed is being reduced as Senior Managers retrained. Whilst this is a positive move by the authority, UNISON holds the view that with reasonable training provided, the vast majority of

the Managers who are being displaced could more than adequately carry out the project work that is undertaken by Consultants.

In summary, UNISON does not believe that whilst the report presented represents the current costs to the authority of employing Consultants, the report should have provided clear breakdown of individual costs to each department. Furthermore, UNISON holds the view that the continuing practice of employing agency staff to cover vacant posts must cease forthwith, and that those staff at risk of redundancy following the Business Transformation Reviews, be considered for these posts in accordance with the New Opportunities Policy of the City Council.

AGENDA ITEM 7 :- “PAYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TRAVEL COSTS FOR LOWER PAID EMPLOYEES WHO ARE SUBJECT TO A COMPULSORY CHANGE IN THEIR WORK LOCATION”.

UNISON is pleased to note that the intention of this report is to award low paid employees a form of compensation when relocating to alternative workplaces as a result of re-organisation. However, UNISON is concerned that the policy is only going to be applicable to postholders who are graded between BG1 – BG5. UNISON holds the view that employees on a grade up to BG7 could be considered as being on low pay, and therefore suggests the grade bands should be extended further than what is being proposed.

UNISON believes that the period that the payments are for should mirror the existing travel policy, and that the period should be for 2 years (24 months). If a decision is taken to implement the arrangements for only 12 months, this could have equal pay implications.

UNISON’s principal concerns surrounding the policy, is that the employees must use public transport buses to qualify. Many of the workplaces in Bristol require more than 1 bus journey to become accessible, and therefore the time physically taken can become excessive.

The trades unions believe car allowances should be considered as an option to avoid lengthy and daresay potentially tiresome journeys being incurred. Equally, some local rail network routes should also be considered as a potential option as this can also prove time saving. Both of these options were suggested during the consultation meetings recently held, and members of the HR committee are asked to consider these points in their decision.

Martin Jones
Branch Secretary
UNISON Bristol Branch

Tel. 0117 9405002

E-mail bristol.unison@bristolunison.co.uk

HR COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM 5 - UNISON

Implementing of HR Restructuring: Establishment of separate Strategic HR and STS HR Function

- 4.3 UNISON would ask that much flexibility is exercised to allow for these additional posts – 5 by April 2010 and 3 from July 2010 to be deleted only by natural wastage - and to allow some surplus to requirement in an inventive way to enable change and the volume of work associated with change to happen in a planned and organized way.
- 4.5 OD Team's review was successful in that no actual people have been made redundant.
- 4.6 UNISON welcomes the fact that the Corporate Training function had an interim plan but would like the Council to give very serious thought about how training and development for all staff is provided in a changing environment; how the Council in partnership with the trade unions and other providers maximizes the potential and investment it makes in staff to ensure the council delivers on its agenda of Improving services to the citizens of Bristol.
- 5.2 Re-location of STS HR to Somerfield House has become a very emotive subject for all involved. Somerfield House involves a difficult and lengthy journey to get to each day in terms of travelling time. The restrictions on car parking spaces continues to cause major problems for many UNISON members in just getting to work each day. If these problems cause our members continuing heartache we hope the council will do everything in its power to look at improving the buses to the site, the car parking spaces, increase the electric bikes and ensure the existing facilities are not lost and are constantly improved.

The trade unions reached an agreement with HR Operations Manager, STS, that full consideration would be given in April that the Transactional Support Advisors (BG6/7/8) posts could be given a career structure to ensure progression to BG8.

This is vital in terms of comparable treatment; the Customer Services jobs in N & HS have always been BG8. It will feel fundamentally unfair if HR sit alongside N & HS on the Customer Services Desk earning less money.

The Equalities Impact Assessment completed has not really done any serious work on shaping what a predominately female work force would want from a 'shared service centre'. Had it shaped what was needed UNISON does not believe Somerfield House would have been chosen and the EIA has had to fit this scenario. This is not a correct application of the Equality Duties.



Submission for Human Resources Committee Thursday 19 November 2009

Agenda item 6 Business Transformation Programme - Use of Contractors (Interim Managers)

Unite the Union is disappointed with the lack of detail in this report. There is no specific information of what posts are being covered, start date and expected length of service.

The use of consultants goes much wider than just for Business Transformation purposes and considering the challenging economic climate we are in should be included here.

Its reassuring to see the Authority has taken action already and future requests to engage a Consultant or Interim Manager will need to go through the newly created Spending and Recruitment Panel.

Agenda item 7 Payment of additional travel costs for lower paid employees who are subject to a compulsory change in their work location

With the amount of change taking place in the Authority and reduction in the number of Council buildings large numbers of staff are being made to change their work location.

The previous Disturbance Allowance Procedure for staff with site specific contracts compensated all staff on a sliding scale who incurred additional travel costs due to a change in work location. Why cannot this Policy also apply to all staff or at least extend the grades covered to include BG6.

Unite's preference is to pay the increased travel costs for 24 months to be consistent with employees who temporarily are working at a different work location. Consideration also needs to be given to the way payments are going to be made. Lump sum payments for six months additional travel costs could have tax/ working family tax credit implications.

Steve Paines, Convenor



17th November 2009

**GMB SUBMISSION TO BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL HR COMMITTEE
19TH NOVEMBER 2009**

The GMB wish to make the following submission:

1 Monitoring of External Contracts

The GMB again have to date not received any communication from officers in relation to our October 2009 submission.

2 Business Transformation Programme – Use of Contractors (Interim Managers)

The GMB welcome the report on use of contractors (interim managers) but we are unclear whether we have a complete set of papers as the report refers to Appendix 5 (programme level business case) The financial aspiration appears to be between £3.84m to £5.05m for years 2008/09 and 2009/10. Is this for the whole council or just for transformation? If the cost for transformation is £1.3m for 2009/10 how much was spent last year? What period is the £1.3m covering (between April 2009-end of October 2009 – 6 months? Does the Council envisage a further £1.3m for the next six months?

The GMB note with interest this expenditure is included within Department's budgets – has this resulted in vacancy management/savings implemented to service delivery in order to accommodate this cost?

The GMB is very supportive of 'home grown' expertise and up-skilling staff in order to reduce the use of external consultants (interim managers).

The GMB is concerned that only one department's financial cost of use of consultants are being brought to the HR Committee – does this mean there are no other departments within the City Council using external consultants or displaced interim managers.

What is the situation in relation to the internal 'interim managers' displaced through the Transformation Review?

3 Payment of additional travel costs for lower paid employees who are subject to a compulsory change in their work location

The GMB support the principal of this report and the proposed travel policy.

However, we are concerned that this policy does not adequately address the issues affecting low paid workers faced with compulsory redeployment. Our concerns are as follows:

- The length of protection should be in line with the City Council's New Opportunities Policy/Managing Change Policy pay protection/contractual enhancements. The duration for pay protection is three years. The GMB is therefore seeking the HR Committee to agree to this parity when considering the pay policy.
- Requiring staff to purchase bus pass via the council's salary sacrifice scheme may result in direct detriment to the employee if they are nearing retirement age or on state benefit – this should not be a requirement.
- The GMB have identified the average bus pass will cost between £73-£80 per month out of an average monthly salary of a BG4 employee (net) £700 per month (based upon 20/25 hours per week)
- Taxis – the GMB cannot support 4.3(ii) relating to 'predictable pattern'. Many of our residential care workers do work to a shift pattern where they will be required to work until 10.00 pm at their new location between 1-4 times per week. This is established but equally in their previous unit they arranged to go home safely. Now they have been moved to other parts of the City this is not possible. Under this clause it appears that our members who work late (until 10.00 pm) would not qualify for assistance with taxi fares.
- The GMB requests that taxi fares should be paid upfront rather than retrospectively. The cost of a taxi fare from Coombe/Brentry to Hartcliffe at 10.00pm could be prohibitive if the employee had to pay this upfront. Is it not possible for either an account facility between the unit/section and a taxi firm or it is paid via petty cash from the unit. This would also ensure the appropriate authority was sought and agreed.
- Grade. The GMB requests the Committee to consider the banding being considered. The report is proposing this is applicable to employees earning BG1-BG5 whilst we

welcome this we consider it needs to include other low paid staff. The GMB considers that staff upto and including BG7 should be included as many workers are part-time on the lower grades and therefore any enforced move will have a significant impact upon their ability to continue in paid employment

In conclusion the GMB request the HR committee to backdate the implementation date for Hollybrook Residential staff (first home to close through the Residential Futures programme) whose home was closed on 15th November and who were forced to take up their posts with effect from 16th November 2009 before this pay policy had been agreed – thus adding to their extreme distress throughout their whole redeployment process.

Rowena Hayward
Organisation Officer

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2009****COMMENTS OF THE JOINT TU SIDE CHAIR AND TU SIDE SECRETARY
TO THE JOINT EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD (JERB)****AGENDA ITEM 6:- “BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME
– USE OF CONTRACTORS (INTERIM
MANAGERS)”**

This report is being presented in view of the extensive comments made by both elected members and the TU side to the JERB, at the last meeting held on the 15th October 2009. In particular, both “sides” shared deep concerns of the continued practice of employing Consultants coming at a time when the City Council is making wholesale changes in the way the services are being provided. Many of these changes will see job losses at all levels.

However, the primary reason for the report was the actual costs incurred on employing Consultants, in order to either carry out special project work, or to cover interim vacancies. As elected TU Officers by the TU Side to the JERB, we are extremely concerned by the lack of detailed information contained in the report of the Service Director (Strategic HR and Workforce Strategy). This report we feel, does not give any indication to the following information:-

1. No. of Consultants in Each Department.
2. “Project Work” that the Consultants are undertaking
3. Commencement date of appointment of Consultants
4. Length/ anticipated duration of the project
5. Cost of Consultant.

The report under Appendix “A” indicate that the cost this year to the authority of employing Consultants will be around £1.3 million, which represents a reduction in previous years expenditure where it had ranged between £3 million and £5 million. Had Appendix “A” highlighted the full picture as defined in points 1 – 5 above, then our concerns on behalf of our colleagues in the JERB would have been more positive.

We also have to express that the issue of employing Agency Staff to cover interim vacancies is itself costly and unsatisfactory, again coming at a time when there are job losses across the authority. We can understand the logic of employing agency staff to provide cover short term cover, but where the post is expected to be vacant for 3 months or longer, then surely it would be in the Council’s interest to formally appoint a person to the post.

The report indicates that the number of Consultants being employed is being reduced as Senior Managers retrained. Whilst this is seen as a positive move by the authority, we believe that with reasonable training provided, the vast majority of the Senior

Officers who are being displaced could more than adequately carry out the project work that is undertaken by Consultants.

In summary, we do not believe that the report presented reflected the views expressed by the JERB in that the report should have provided clear breakdown of individual costs to each department of employing Consultants. Furthermore, we hold the view that the continuing practice of employing agency staff to cover vacant posts must cease forthwith, and that those staff at risk of redundancy following the Business Transformation Reviews, be considered for these posts in accordance with the New Opportunities Policy of the City Council.

Dick North (NUT) Chair of TU Side to the JERB

Martin Jones (UNISON), Secretary of TU Side to the JERB