



**Proposed reallocation of functions and senior
management structure within the Development and
Regeneration Department**

UNISON Response

March 2012

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been formulated by UNISON, in consultation with members in Development and Regeneration as a response to the Council's management review (March 2012).
- 1.2 Consultation commenced on 12th March when a report was presented to the joint trades unions and affected staff. The report outlined the rationale, timetable and proposals for implementation.

2.0 UNISON Analysis

- 2.1 It is noted that UNISON has had just 10 days to consult with members and formulate this response, due to the timetable set-out by management. UNISON had a formal request for a weeks' extension to the consultation turned down by management.
- 2.2 This has been particularly disappointing considering the likely impact on our directly affected members and our wider membership throughout Development and Regeneration.
- 2.3 However, we have had an opportunity to meet with our members on one occasion and we have received other representations from the affected members. This document is representative of the view of our affected members.

UNISON has a number of concerns regarding these proposals as follows:

Rationale for the review

- 2.4 The management report fails to adequately explain the rationale for the review. Instead, that management rationale is merely a statement of history and facts whilst failing to explain what is being proposed. For example, paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.1.5 mentions the savings challenge and the fact that posts vacated over the previous 2-3 years have been disestablished to meet savings requirements. Yet this management review proposes the creation of two new Head of Service posts (Grade 14) at a time of yet deeper spending cuts and increasing budgetary pressures over the next five years.
- 2.5 Paragraph 2.2 makes further assertions about "the need" for "appropriate management support", to "establish capacity" and to meet "external and internal demands on the service" without providing any evidence that such needs exist and, if they do, why they are not currently being met. Furthermore, additional capacity is soon to be made available with the imminent return of a Strategic Development Manager (Grade 12) whose post has been vacant, and work distributed elsewhere in the structure, for the last 2 ½ years.

Planning Division Review 2009/2010

- 2.6 The Planning and Building Division was reviewed 2 ½ years ago, resulting in 30% cuts in staff. As part of that review, the Head of Planning Control post (Grade 14) was made redundant.
- 2.7 Since the Planning Review has been implemented, the Head of Building Control (Grade 13) post has been held vacant after the last postholder took VER.

2.8 This management review proposes the re-introduction of this Head of Planning Control post that was made redundant two years ago. If this post was deemed surplus to requirements two years ago, why is it suddenly deemed necessary so soon after a comprehensive review of the entire Planning Division?

2.9 The management justification for the re-introduction of this post is that the Chief Planning and Housing Officer needs additional support due to taking on responsibility for Community Housing Services, after the departure of the Chief Housing Officer. However, UNISON notes that the Council's housing service has reduced considerably following the stock transfer to Bolton at Home in 2011. Housing Services seem likely to be reduced further when the expected Savings and Efficiencies Review is implemented in 2013.

2.10 UNISON believes that it should be possible for this additional work to be absorbed without the need to create new senior management post, particularly one that was made redundant.

2.11 If there are problems with capacity in the Planning Division, it is front line posts in Enforcement and Building Control, not in the existing management structure.

Proposed Economic Strategy Section

2.12 The proposed new Head of Economic Strategy post combines Planning Strategy, which would appear to have functioned well previously without a Head of Service, Housing Strategy, which would logically report to the Head of Housing Services, and Employment and Skills, which is an operational rather than strategic service.

2.13 Furthermore, the latter is inextricably linked to the Business Bolton service, particularly at the current time when all available operational resources are being deployed to support the delivery of the Work Programme contract.

2.14 Given the Work Programme contract may not continue beyond the middle of this year and that a restructure would be required should this happen (presumably resulting in redundancies), UNISON believes that implementing these proposals on the 1st May is not sensible.

Proposed Ringfences

2.15 UNISON believes that the ringfence for the proposed Grade 14 posts should be wider than management has proposed in the report.

2.16 This is particularly the case in the ringfence for the proposed Head of Development Management post (Grade 14), where the proposed ringfence excludes the existing Development Manager (Planning Strategy) on the grounds that there is a comparable post on the proposed structure. However, the Development Manager (Planning Strategy) is currently very closely aligned with the three Development Manager posts in Development Control and, therefore, should have an equal opportunity to express an interest in the new Head of Development Management post. Indeed, the existing job descriptions of all four Development Managers are equally similar to the proposed new post.

2.17 The report is unclear as to whether a redundancy situation would occur if certain scenarios were to happen after recruitment to the new Head of Service posts. For example, if the two Strategic Development Managers were successful at assessment and were appointed to the Head of Service posts, that would leave three existing Development Managers competing for one Strategic Development Manager post (Grade 12). However, UNISON has members within the existing Strategic Development department that would

have an equal claim to this Grade 12 post.

2.18 If two Development Managers were successful at assessment and were appointed to the Head of Service posts, that would leave two existing Strategic Development managers competing for one Grade 12 post.

Timescales

2.19 Management has not provided justification as to why the proposals must be rushed through consultation and implemented from 1st May 2012.

2.20 Development and Regeneration has functioned without a second Assistant Director for nearly three years and without two Heads of Service for approximately two years. The level of resources currently available is commensurate with the demands/workloads being made on the service now and, in the economic development area, likely to prevail for the foreseeable future.

Implications for other D&R staff

2.21 It would appear from the report that the Planning Strategy section is to be separated from the rest of the Planning Division (Development Management and Building Control).

2.22 However, as part of the Planning Review, these three divisions were closely aligned together, with a large number of staff being slotted-in to generic posts (Career Grade Planning Officers and Assistant Development Officers). During the Planning Review, management argued that generic posts were needed to allow for officers to learn new disciplines across the whole Planning Division. It now appears that this rationale for the Planning Review has been disowned with the separation of Planning Strategy from the rest of the Planning Division.

Building Control Management

2.23 The management proposals includes the consolidation of an honorarium for the Building Control Team Leader.

2.24 Whilst UNISON has no objections to this in principle, it is unclear what will happen to the existing post of Building Control Team Leader once the current postholder slots into the new Building Control Manager post (Grade 11).

Interview Panels

2.25 The report does not include details of the make-up of any interview panels for the proposed Head of Service posts.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That management revisit the rationale for the proposals, particularly in light of the previously implemented Planning Review, current workloads and likely future service demands in the context of deeper spending cuts and increasing budgetary pressures.
- 3.2 That management implements a wider ringfence to the proposed Grade 14 posts to include the existing Development Manager (Planning Strategy).
- 3.3 That management provides clarification as to what would happen if the scenarios detailed above at 2.17 and 2.18 play out during selection to the new Grade 14 posts.
- 3.4 That management provides further details as to the expected impact of these proposals on the wider Development and Regeneration department. Of particular Interest is what these proposals mean to those staff that are currently working in generic job groups that are a legacy of the Planning Review.
- 3.5 That management provides clarification as to what will happen to the vacant Building Control Team Leader post (Grade 9) once the honorarium is consolidated at grade 11.
- 3.6 Management to enter into discussions with UNISON as to the make-up of the interview panels for the proposed new Head of Service posts.