

REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S MIDDLE MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND THE IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES AND SERVICES – Chair ECF

Reason for Report

The impact of the introduction and the implementation of the MMR process have created unprecedented levels of stress to employees who participated in the MMR and their colleagues. It has also been brought to the attention of Unison that the Change Management Team along with the Human Resources has acted out side the spirit of the Protocol for Managing Organisational Change presented to the ECF on 4th February 2004 and thereby misled the ECF and its members.

Background

In Appendix 2, Section 1.4 outlines the means of appointing to Posts in New Structure. Assimilation, Ring Fencing and Open Competition stated are the three methods to be used for these appointments. However it further states unless in **exceptional circumstances**, assimilation should be used wherever possible. It is possible this statement, more than any other, would have made the Unison and the ECF to agree to such a Protocol. Unfortunately, the Senior Managers took this opportunity to completely disregard this first principle and decided they are not going to assimilate staff regardless. The Change Management Team and the HR Section appear to have offered no opposition to this policy change.

The Protocol also states that each appointment will be assessed and agreed with the Trade Union, a simple but important matter which affected all Managers who served this Authority for many years, ignored or provided excuses not to practice this policy.

Unison has been approached by members and non members who are completely puzzled and distorted by these decisions of non assimilation when the new posts advertised were hardly different from their existing jobs.

There was no procedure followed for appeals or consultation with the post holders. Most of the managers realised that they did not have a job anymore only when they read the E-mail sent by the Change Management team. It is completely contrary to the principles of the Protocol, which states in its introduction that the purpose of the Protocol is to mitigate the impact of this Change on employees of the Council. Unison has made many efforts to try and rectify these unfair and illegal practices but our calls have fallen on deaf ears. The senior management team appears to have made their mind up to ditch the protocol and its principles so that it gives them a free hand in choosing the personnel of their choice.

This attitude was fully supported by the HR and Change Management teams to the detriment to the employees of this Council and its residents. This apparent lack of care by the senior managers and the HR team left the employees of this Council in a very vulnerable and fearful position. The senior management and the HR team exploited the loyalty of these managers to this Organisation and had been treating them with disrespect and contempt.

It is no coincidence that the level of concern within the middle managers is at an all time high and people seem not to care any more. As we all know that the response to “Bad Management” is people cease to care!

Process

The MMR process started well before the final structure of the Council was agreed. This led to managers not applying for certain posts as they did not know which directorate they are going to be. Since the appointment of the new posts, other sections have been merged to create super directorates. However, it appears no regard has been given to those managers who have missed the opportunity to be a part of the MMR process of no fault of their own.

Under the Ring Fencing selection criteria, under Section 2 (page 10) states that this process should be objective and precisely defined and capable of being applied independently. Little did the ECF knew at the time of approving this Protocol about the new criteria called “Development Need”.

1 in 4 managers were not appointed for the reason that they had “Development Needs”. But when you look at only 50% success rate at MMR process, this figure becomes 1 in 2. These criteria brought in the subjectivity Senior Managers and HR needed to deny employees their posts. It is further surprising to see, these managers who could not be appointed as they were with immediate development needs and then allowed to carry on their posts for months on end making decision about structure changes and other key decisions.

On one hand it was decided not to assimilate managers on the false pretence that all new posts are significantly different from current. Then at the interview they are told that they have development needs to do the new job and they could not be appointed. Many managers did not agree with the feedback reports or with the interview itself, but they felt that if they challenge these decisions they might adversely affect any chances, however small it might have been, they would have at the external process.

Once again this particular behaviour allowed the senior managers and the HR teams to continue with their “Change” without question or resistance.

Currently the MMR is a process looked with horror and anxiety by those who are waiting to go on it and with sadness and despair by those who have been on it. Hardly a process designed and practised to mitigate the impact on employees.

It is Unison’s view that Members knowingly or unknowingly allowed the employees of this Council to be treated unfairly and against the protocols agreed at the ECF. Trade Unions are not charged with the management of the Council. It is the remit of the Members and as employees’ representatives at this Forum we respectfully ask the Forum to appoint a panel to investigate these serious injustices to its long standing and loyal employees.