

Unison response to the Council Improvement Plan

Unison would raise concerns with regards to the future of the IT department we believe that this area of expertise should remain an in-house service, and should be supported rather than under resourced and for the resources to be fairly allocated between partner (Capita BTP) and in house IT services and for efficiencies to be seen on a fair and equal basis. This service would allow the council to retain control of the systems used by this authority, and not to be fully influenced by an outside or partnership body, we have seen the affect to other service areas when savings from the councils partners are not met. The services of the in house IT department, Unison believe has been set up to fail over a three year period. The BVI indicators have been positive for the in-house service.

Unison strongly objects to the role out of contribution based pay (contribution and Reward) as this is a clear breach of the contractual rights and arrangements for all employees of the council. This system would be based on the employers' discretion whether to allow the employee to progress to the next wage increment, and would be used as a method of savings; this in turn will result in low morale and poor performance; which contradicts the basis of this improvement plan. This pay scheme if abused may in turn provide a platform for equal pay claims, and the costs could spiral. The matter in front of cabinet tonight has circumvented the right to consult and negotiate with all parties and put forward by an arbitrary decision from the head of the HR department, as illustrated by the improvement plan and the unrealistic time scales imposed 'two days given to respond to cabinet plus one day consultation' on this important issue. Unison would draw to your attention the failure to adhere to the current policies and procedures by management and HR. The interpretation of these policies and the 'discretion' of managers has at best been inconsistent and as such any proposed performance based pay should be withdrawn from implementation. Unison would request that this matter be returned to the negotiating table, rather than progressed in an arbitrary manner.

Management Development- Unison has major concerns regarding the amount of investment that continues to be made in the training and development of manages. To date the investment has not been realised in the any improvement of performance and contribution by managers to good workforce relations in many areas of the council. The latest investment in

this area was stated during the presentation of the improvement plan as in the region of £70,000, what proportion does this figure represent in regard to the overall workforce training/development investment. Unison questions the reasoning behind the need to continually and repeatedly train managers?

A culture change will only occur if the morale of the staff is increased. By the introduction of this improvement plan it is likely to achieve will the reverse effect. This improvement plan was presented to Unison to resolve the low morale that has been uncovered by the Authority. This hastily progressed document should be returned to the negotiation table for creative input that would encompass the views of the whole workforce.

The inappropriate use of temporary and agency staff provides Unison with a clear picture of mismanagement; not just money but this also suppresses the Councils equal opportunities employer status by providing employment outside of the competitive process. The total misuse of the as-and-when policy has resulted in extra costs being aligned to certain departments. Again Unison asks; what cost is attributed by this mismanagement?

Unison is extremely disappointed by the way in which the officers of the council are dismissive of any union in-put this again is clearly seen by the limited time scales given and by the clear reduction in time to respond.