

## **Consultation Outcome Document: Planning & Building Control**

**To:** Planning & Building Control teams  
**From:** Martin Randall, Head of Planning & Public Protection  
**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### **1. Introduction**

Following the end of the period of formal consultation on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014, all of your comments, views and ideas have been considered. This paper summarises the feedback received from written representations, the staff meetings and one to one meetings. It explains what decisions have been made regarding the proposals as a result and has been issued to our recognised trade unions. Please read this paper with reference to the original consultation paper.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your contributions which have been very helpful in shaping the final structure proposals.

### **2. Feedback & Outcomes**

A significant amount of feedback was received on the proposals of the consultation document, thank you for your valued engagement with this process.

The feedback received has been summarised, and the responses and their rationale are in Appendix 1 attached. Where individual employees have raised specific individual queries that are not appropriate to cover in the summary document at Appendix 1, I have sought to respond individually.

### **3. Overview and Main Changes**

Overall, I am grateful for the many expressions of support for a collaborative style of working focussed on our customers and a clear commitment to a 'one team' approach.

I am aware that the prospect of generic job descriptions raised a number of concerns and represents a significant change for many of you. Whilst maintaining the integrity of an approach based upon offering flexibility, I have proposed some changes to the wording of job descriptions to respond to particular concerns. For example, appropriate references to the specialist skills and experience of colleagues working on conservation matters have been added to reflect the importance of these key roles.

A number of people expressed concern about the balance of management responsibility in the current Development Control Team; and in particular the absence of Senior Team Planners in the new structure. In consultation with members of the team I have sought to address this by adding some management capacity including a new part-time post at M8; and re-distributing staff to create a better balance between the Lead Professionals.

Inevitably, this has meant adjusting other posts to ensure that it is affordable. In addition, I have had a very useful dialogue with members of the team to look at how the balance of work would be spread between Principal Planning Officers in the Applications Team in a manageable and productive way with clear lines of responsibility for workload and staff.

A number of people across the teams highlighted the level at which they would be expected to work in the new structure and questioned whether the job titles accurately reflected that responsibility. I have acknowledged this point with particular reference to 'Senior Planning Officer' which will be replaced by 'Principal Planning Officer'.

Some colleagues, notably Planning Officers raised issues around the grade of the new post. I believe the grade is appropriate for the job description and I am confident that the new structure offers a clear path for career progression for Planning Officers who perform a vital role. Pay will be protected in line with the Pay Protection Policy.

In summary the main changes to the proposals are as follows;

- The job title of Senior Planning Officer has been changed to Principal Planning Officer.
- The job description for the Sustainability Appraisal Officer has been reviewed and will be submitted for re-evaluation (attached).
- The M9 investigations & Enforcement Manager post is deleted.
- An additional M8 (0.6 FTE) Planning Manager Lead Professional – Investigations & Enforcement is created.
- An M10 Principal Planning Officer will work in the Investigations & Enforcement team reporting to the above post.
- Resource has been re-allocated within Applications to create a more balanced structure.
- Job descriptions have been revised, evaluated and grades confirmed.

Please see the attached structure chart at Appendix 2 confirming the changes and grades.

#### **4. Response**

Please see Appendix 1, attached, for a summary of feedback and management response

#### **5. Consultation process**

The consultation paper was issued to all employees by the council and the recognised trade unions (UNISON & GMB) on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.

Two formal group meetings were held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2014, both of which were attended by UNISON and GMB representatives.

These meetings gave an opportunity for staff to feedback their initial thoughts and views about the proposals, and were well attended.

Notes were taken from both of the meetings and hopefully all areas of concern have been addressed. An initial set of Questions and Answers was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.

1:1 meetings were offered and all staff were encouraged to take part in these. Many staff declined to attend as they felt the group feedback issued by UNISON had summarised their views sufficiently.

All of your comments have been welcomed and have enabled us to consider the full impact of the proposals that were set out in the consultation paper.

## **6. Outcome**

After much consideration, I have decided that the proposals presented in the consultation paper, subject to the amendments set out in Section 3 in this document and the attached structure chart, will be implemented from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

The proposals are illustrated in the accompanying Structure Chart.

Amended Job Descriptions are attached as Appendix 3.

## **7. What happens next**

If you would like an individual meeting please do arrange directly with your line manager. Those staff identified as ring fenced need to submit a brief outline (maximum 1 side of A4) to me describing how you meet the criteria for the role you are ring fenced for. Please provide this by Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June for the M6 posts and Monday 16<sup>th</sup> for all other posts. Selection processes will commence from 11<sup>th</sup> June and staff will be contacted individually regarding arrangements. Decisions on specific duties relating to M10s will be decided as soon as possible after the appointment of the M8 Managers. Implementation of the new structure is anticipated for July.

## **8. Support**

I am very much aware that change can be unsettling and cause anxiety and uncertainty. Any individual concerns relating to the restructure can be discussed on a one-to-one basis with, your line manager, Human Resources or your union representative who will try to clarify any issues or concerns you may have.

## **9. Conclusion**

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the service I am hopeful that the response to the consultation to date clearly demonstrates that I value this process and your feedback on significant service decisions.

