

Appendix B

UNISON comments on report to Executive:

Structural Change Senior Leadership Team

Overall UNISON supports the recommendations contained in the report and is pleased the authority is moving back to a more traditional organisational structure. The move away from continued cuts to budgets and services and the rebuilding of recognisable services can only build confidence and security for our staff and customers.

In particular we welcome the Council's recognition of the importance of the authority as a major landlord and having an identifiable Director with responsibility for housing and control of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). UNISON has previously raised concerns about the potential for the weakening of the ring fence that should exist to protect the HRA and the inappropriate use of HRA funds to pay for General Fund activities and those of other agencies.

The recognition of the importance of the role the authority as a place shaper and the role the Director for Development and Place will have in developing a clear vision for all projects in Somerset West and Taunton is welcome, together with the importance of having a recognisable planning service. This can only assist the Council in the retention and recruitment of professionally qualified planning officers.

We would be keen for this approach to be adopted across other areas of the authority where recognisable professions exist such as Finance, Environmental Health, Housing, skilled trades etc.

UNISON does however, have some questions and concerns as follows:

1. UNISON notes with the appointment of the four new Directors the potential for a change in the level of responsibility of the posts of Head of Functions. Therefore, as at such time any HoF post becomes vacant and the decision is made to fill the vacancy, UNISON will expect to see that the salary awarded will reflect the appropriate level of responsibilities.
2. UNISON does have concerns about how posts will be disentangled from the current structure to the new proposed directorships without causing significant disruption to staff. We understand your proposal is to lift and shift staff where appropriate but many are working across multiple areas.
3. We are concerned the new structure now appears to be "top heavy" with a new layer of management added, 4 new Directors and 7 Heads of Function.

4. UNISON appreciate recruitment is still underway for front line staff but would have concerns if the funding required to pay for the 4 new Director Posts is at the detriment to the needs of the wider business and being able to recruit posts for the delivery of front line services.
5. UNISON is concerned that the appointment of the New Directors may result in a further period of reorganisation of the Council services, following what has already been a very long and disruptive process of transformation.

11th July 2019

Neil Anderson

Branch Secretary

On behalf of UNISON SWT Branch