

Regeneration and Economic Development Realignment

Feedback on comments received

Employee Comments	Response, where necessary
<p>General</p> <p>Unison members were uneasy with the very short length of the consultation and would like to request that this is extended to at least 30 days.</p>	<p>Noted. No previous requests for an extension have been received and extensive comments have now been received from Unison and employees</p>
<p>Catering Service</p> <p>Rather than close the HKP Kitchen altogether, my recommendation is to reduce the Catering team's working hours. This would only involve a slight reduction in the opening hours</p> <p>If the catering team remains this also allows meetings to be serviced as well as food for buffets and the various other catering duties such as Civic Events, breakfast clubs etc will remain unaffected.</p> <p>With the already increased prices, some more careful purchasing and management and increased footfall, breakeven is a very real prospect. This outcome would contribute the same level of savings as closure.</p>	<p>This proposal has a lot of merit but breakeven cannot be guaranteed and introduces risk to meet the savings target.</p> <p>A failure to generate the required savings and revenue would still require the budget savings to be found from elsewhere.</p>
<p>I joined the council in May this year and have used the canteen pretty much every day since joining, the quality and freshness of food is fantastic and the price is reasonable.</p> <p>I would like to see the canteen remain open, but should the decision be made to close it I would hope that the council do provide adequate storage should staff decide to bring fresh food in.</p>	<p>There is no question over the quality of food. Consideration would be given to adequate storage provision for staff should the catering service close.</p>
<p>With regard to the HKP Kitchen, perhaps if more emphasis was placed on pre-ordering, this would speed up the lunch time service and help staff to save time</p>	<p>Noted. Pre ordering would require a major culture change and would not guarantee the savings required.</p>

<p>on their purchasing.</p> <p>Consideration has to be given as to whether the correct prices are being charged and whether the Council can achieve the best economies of scale to meet them.</p> <p>If the decision is made that running an in house canteen is no longer viable, I would hope that serious thought would be given to alternative ways for staff to purchase food without leaving the building.</p> <p>While we are close to the City Centre and The Quays, it does take some time to get to the nearest sandwich shop or supermarket so an in house option would be preferable.</p>	<p>Consideration will be given to alternative service provision, subject to viability.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the City Centre location, it is not unreasonable for staff to use the outlets on offer.</p>
<p>I note the proposal to close the catering operation in the HKP kitchen. Have any alternative options been explored - a reduced service with shorter opening hours and more efficient processes in the kitchen ?</p> <p>Additionally, a survey to find out what people would actually like to see on sale in the kitchen may help to generate custom.</p>	<p>This has been considered but does not guarantee the savings required. The smaller the window of operation also creates greater emphasis to make a return during that period.</p>
<p>Withdrawing the catering facility would impact Customer Services greatly. Most of us work part time and therefore do not get a lunch break or, at best, only half an hour. This would mean we wouldn't be able to get anything to eat during our working day.</p>	<p>Noted. Alternative service provision would be considered, subject to viability.</p>
<p>There must be a strong case for a greatly reduced catering operation offering hot and cold drinks with perhaps a facility to pre-order a simple range of (brought in) sandwiches.</p>	<p>As above. Staff already have the ability to make hot and cold drinks. Drinks for meetings will not be impacted.</p> <p>Alternative provision of food would be considered that does not compromise building security or undermine resource availability.</p>

<p>I understand that the proposal is to close the kitchen as part of the restructure. Does this mean that there will be no refreshments available for partnership meetings, seminars or conferences? Will we have to get external caterers in or go elsewhere?</p>	<p>Full details of alternative service provisions will be given, if the decision to close the Kitchen is made.</p> <p>Drinks for meetings will not be impacted.</p>
<p>I wanted to advise how useful disabled staff find the staff canteen to be, particularly those with walking difficulties. They very rarely leave the offices at lunch time to head into town/the quays. As such, they rely on the staff canteen for lunch more so than most other people, and would be significantly affected by its proposed closure.</p>	<p>Noted. However there remains the need for savings to be made. Due to its central location, there are other outlets in close proximity to the City Council offices.</p> <p>It would not be unreasonable for staff to bring in their own food for lunch, thereby removing the need for a subsidised canteen.</p>
<p>The catering team provide a well-used and important service which many at the council use regularly. I use their service upwards of 3 times per week and know many people who use the service every day.</p> <p>The benefits include being able to quickly get food or drinks without needing to walk into town, particularly during bad weather. The argument has been put forward that not having this in-house service would increase the spend in the center. While this is true to a limited extent, a more likely outcome would be the total spend decreases due to the time it takes to walk into town and the cost of paying for more expensive food options when compared to the in-house catering.</p> <p>The overall cost, as noted above, of the catering team's offer is significantly cheaper than comparable offerings in town, but with similar levels of quality.</p>	<p>There are benefits of staff taking a break away from their desk. Staff are also able to bring in their own food at lunch time.</p>
<p>How much was invested in the setting up of the kitchen space and associated store areas? Losing this service would essentially write off at least part of this investment.</p>	<p>Noted, although research into local suppliers suggests that the costs are comparable if not lower, and more flexible, removing an on-going revenue cost and risk.</p>

<p>What would be the cost of external catering companies providing the same service which the in-house team provide? I would suggest that any like for like service for corporate events would be more costly from external sources.</p> <p>The figure of a loss of £10,300 was noted in the report and it would be good to better understanding what is included in this figure. If, for example, any of the costs associated with building works or facilities investment were included, this would obviously be unrealistic.</p> <p>The report also noted the operating loss should not affect services to the community. Employing 4 members of staff is a direct investment in the community and the salaries which they are given will be re-invested (to a certain degree) in the community.</p> <p>Two suggestions : expand the corporate and events catering to increase revenue; raise the cost of the food and drink by a fixed percentage. This would help to offset the losses noted in the consultation document.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Should the canteen close, every effort will be made for staff to have access to posts available within the City Council, in line with HR policies and procedures.</p> <p>Noted, although increased costs may make the facility unattractive to staff and be counterproductive.</p>
<p>Many staff rely on the catering service for hot food at midday and for snacks at other times throughout the day. It is short sighted to close this service as it will mean staff who currently work through their lunchtime and pop down to the kitchen for something to eat will have to spend more time away from their desk accessing lunch further afield.</p>	<p>All staff are entitled to a lunch break and are encouraged to take it away from their desks.</p> <p>It is quite within the ability of our staff and managers to manage their time or to bring in food. The City Council Office is also located within the City centre making access to food sellers readily accessible within a short distance.</p>
<p>How will catering for civic events be managed – this is currently prepared by The Docks Catering service?</p> <p>Where are the projected estimated costings for civic event catering requirements (by external companies) or will this service be provided by</p>	<p>Appropriate arrangements will be put in pace. Drinks for meetings will be unaffected although ordering of supplies will need to be considered.</p> <p>Should the catering service close, a procedure will be provided to budget holders to order food. It will be their</p>

<p>Guildhall/Museum catering staff instead who are on zero hour contracts?</p> <p>There will be a new cost to the Council from civic catering – currently this is hidden in existing staff wages – this is not discussed in the paper.</p>	<p>responsibility to order food for events, in conjunction with the Senior Custodian.</p> <p>Civic catering is currently dealt with through ordering and individual budget holders/codes. This will not change other than the process of food preparation and delivery</p>
<p>It seems short sighted to mothball the newly refurbished kitchen – which was provided at some expense (£20,000) and works well with the newly refurbished staff room over the mid-day period.</p>	<p>The proposal to close the Kitchen was not taken lightly. Alternative service provision will continue to be explored in the event that closure is agreed.</p>
<p>Maybe to increase income the kitchen could supply other adjacent Warehouses with lunchtime catering? It should be moved up to ground floor to enable access to visitors and external customers. The café could also be moved to the ground floor with a public counter so both staff and public can use facility. Why not bring back the trolley service this made money.</p>	<p>The success of additional revenue streams are not guaranteed and have therefore been discounted.</p> <p>There would also be cost and security considerations if these proposals were adopted.</p>
<p>Why is a service losing just 10K per annum being cut when the service as a whole brings in £1.5 million to the authority?</p>	<p>The savings are required to meet the targeted savings for the Asset Management Service, as identified through the Councils Money Plan.</p> <p>The closure of the Kitchen was identified as an alternative to the loss of additional posts within the remainder of Asset Management and the ability to build an Urban Regeneration team to contribute towards economic growth.</p>
<p>The loss of the catering facility is disappointing and a missed opportunity especially after the costly refurbishment of the basement to accommodate this function. This should not be wasted after such a short period.</p> <p>Could the catering team not look at generating an income by providing the much needed catering facilities elsewhere for City Council functions such as the City and Folk museums,</p>	<p>Noted. The proposal to close the Kitchen was not taken lightly.</p> <p>The outstations are already covered by separate catering arrangements but this is a potential option.</p>

Blackfriars and Guildhall?	
<p>Facilities</p> <p>If the Kitchen is retained then the role of Facilities Team Leader and Senior Custodian, as outlined in the consultation document, needs to be considered, to ensure the Custodian teams continue to operate in their usual smooth and professional way.</p> <p>If the Facilities Team Leader post is deleted will the Senior Custodian role take on the budgetary and contract management responsibilities ? Also will the Senior Custodian be responsible for procuring light refreshments for all meetings held at GCC ?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>It is likely that the senior custodian role will take on these responsibilities.</p>
<p>The role of the City Marshall currently sits in the Senior Custodian's job description. This would need to be retained in the new role.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>We have a situation where the Facilities Team Leader and Senior Custodian posts are being combined into a single post. Whoever eventually fills that role will have far more responsibilities than their existing roles and to be paid less than the higher role is at present will lead to feelings of low morale and disgruntlement, or if an external employee is employed, the quality of that person will be less than existing, due to the limited pay on offer.</p> <p>It is noted however that this lowering of the grade level would take into account reduced responsibility due to the catering team being deleted, if this is decided.</p>	<p>Noted. The grade for the successor role is indicative and intended to take account of the loss of the catering service. All new and revised posts will be subject to job evaluation to ensure that they are graded correctly.</p>
<p>Reducing number of custodians – relying on only 3 custodian's means more out of hours/anti-social working for each officer. It only needs 1 to be on leave and 1 sick to place all the burden of out of hours work on 1 custodian.</p>	<p>There is no change to the number of Custodians under these proposals. Workloads will continue to be monitored to ensure that they are manageable.</p>

<p>Asset Management</p> <p>Regarding the changes to the building surveying service, I note that the amount of DFG work that the re-structured service will be able to carry out will be reduced to 50%, this will have an impact on our potential to deliver DFG's in time if the alternative service, Mears Safe at Home, are unable to pick up the surplus.</p> <p>Also, the document doesn't mention the work in default projects that the building surveyor service picks up. This service is very useful and saves officers having to individually arrange their own WID when a notice is not complied with - will it still be available to us after re-structure ?</p>	<p>There will be a transition period as change comes into effect. These matters will be considered as part of that transition period to ensure business continuity.</p> <p>Noted and will be subject to further discussion with the Asset Manager.</p>
<p>The post of Senior Projects Officer should be ring-fenced to that of Senior Building Works Officer, due to its similarities, rather than the Building Works Officer post.</p> <p>Can it please be clearly explained exactly where the 60% similarity is between the post of Senior Projects Officer and ring fenced post of Building Works Officer?</p>	<p>Agreed. The ring-fence will be extended to include the Senior Projects Officer.</p> <p>The 60% overlap in duties only applies to assimilation. Ring-fencing occurs when: an employee's post is deleted, and an alternative position or positions are introduced, and the employee's grade is the same (or one above / below) as the grade of the new post(s) or the employee is at the management tier appropriate to the new post(s).</p>
<p>Were the existing JDs and PSs of employees discussed in detail with the Asset Manager ? Has his input been fully considered within the restructure? Will the interviewers be suitable when selecting for the new posts?</p> <p>Why were employees not engaged with for clarity?</p>	<p>The proposals were discussed with the relevant senior managers and their input considered.</p> <p>Affected employees will be consulted over the job descriptions once the structure has been agreed and prior to any job evaluation or selection process commencing.</p>

<p>The new regeneration posts could be assimilated within the existing skill set of Asset Management and this could make a significant saving.</p>	<p>Noted. This will be considered as part of the PS and JD's for the new posts.</p>
<p>The Southgate Street Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a heritage-led regeneration project. A key element is the provision of valuation, survey and contract advice for works to buildings and public realm areas, as a means of delivering restoration projects. This work has been very ably provided through our partners in the Asset Management Team.</p> <p>I must reflect on the excellent work and support that has been provided by this Team in bringing this key City Council project forward, and the potential impact to the project as externally-sourced services would be likely to cost significantly more, and take longer to deliver. We would also lose any continuity in terms of local knowledge and understanding of the project.</p>	<p>Agreed. There is no intention to withdraw support from this, or any other project. There will need to be greater prioritisation in work activity.</p>
<p>The workload of the vacant position of Senior Building Surveyor has been absorbed by the Senior Project Officer. As a result it was recognised that this role was a necessity and consideration should be given to whether deleting it is logical. This may have a larger impact than anticipated on the department.</p> <p>Without the post of Senior Projects Officer both the Reception Refurbishment and the Accommodation Review projects would have needed to have been outsourced.</p> <p>The overall spend for both these schemes, plus numerous others delivered from concept to completion, would have increased significantly had they been outsourced.</p>	<p>Agreed. It is intended that the responsibility and capacity for in-house projects will be retained in the new structure.</p> <p>The savings need to be found, as per the approved Money Plan. The Council will undertake new ways of delivering projects and programmes.</p>

<p>Our only Director is currently on leave and won't be returning until after the consultation period is finished. I do not feel it is appropriate to conduct the consultation period, consider potential amendments, and sign it off during this time.</p>	<p>The Director has been and will continue to be consulted on the proposals prior to final sign-off.</p>
<p>The Proposal Document for Consultation has been signed off by members. It would be useful to know what input they have had into the document, and what their knowledge is of the skill set of people within the Asset Management team.</p>	<p>The proposal document was agreed at the Gloucester Leadership Team and will be considered by elected members at both Employee Forum and Organisational Development Committee following the completion of consultation with staff and trades unions.</p>
<p>I should be grateful if a cost breakdown of the proposed savings were provided. As far as I am aware a £100K saving is approximately 2.5 posts (give or take). The Proposal Document for Consultation states that 16 posts are to be deleted, including the kitchen facilities. Even with the creation of 7 new posts, and that a number of the existing posts are part time positions this seems inaccurate.</p>	<p>The revised structure reflects the required savings and the ability of the Council to deliver existing and changing priorities.</p> <p>The detail relates to individuals salaries which is not appropriate to make public.</p>
<p>Can it please be confirmed that the consultation period is correct. The Proposal Document for Consultation states that the consultation period is from the 23rd October to the 12th November 2014 which is only 21 days.</p> <p>The Organisational Change document, as supplied by HR, states that a minimum of 30 days is required before dismissal notices will be issued. It does not mention in the Proposal Document for Consultation when dismissal notices will be issued. Can it please be clarified whether the consultation period is the correct length, and when dismissal notices will be issued?</p>	<p>The consultation period may be extended if required to allow more time for responses.</p> <p>If staff are displaced from their roles and cannot be accommodated within the new structure then they will be treated as displaced.</p> <p>This will only be confirmed once the selection process has been completed and they will then be considered for redeployment across the whole council.</p> <p>If no suitable alternative posts can be identified during this period then they may be made redundant.</p>
<p>I understand that my current salary would be protected for 12 months should I be successful in securing ring fenced</p>	<p>Yes, this is correct.</p>

<p>position at a lower grade.</p>	
<p>When will the JDs and PSs be released for the ring fenced and new positions? I would assume that I could apply for one of the new positions as well as my ring fenced position. Can this please be confirmed?</p>	<p>The job descriptions will be produced once the final structure has been agreed. These will be subject to consultation with the relevant staff prior to finalisation. They will then be job evaluated and ring-fenced staff will have the opportunity to express an interest for the posts, as appropriate.</p> <p>A similar process will apply with the new posts. These will be released for internal applications once the selection and redeployment processes have been completed.</p>
<p>I think it is also worth mentioning that all people in posts that are at risk should be reminded to remain professional at all times. I understand that this is a difficult process and emotions will be strained but that does not excuse some behaviour that is beginning to emerge.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>In terms of the Clerk of Works, Grade F, combined with the Senior Project Assistant, I would advise against the reduction in grading, given the level of work expected to be undertaken. Also the suggestion is for a whole post to be combined with an existing post, leading to potentially double the work.</p> <p>I would suggest changing the title of that post to Senior Projects Officer, particularly given the really technical and competent work being carried out by the current post-holder. The Senior Projects Officer currently prepares tender and preliminary documents, as well as legal documents and, to date, has provided a very competent service and offered logical and helpful suggestions.</p> <p>In terms of work streams, the cladding of unattractive facades projects will be requiring a significant amount of time from this senior position for some time to come, as well as on-going office moves</p>	<p>Noted. The resultant post will be job evaluated and the grade will take into account the level of responsibility.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

<p>work.</p>	
<p>New Regeneration posts – these posts are consulted on at an H & an E grade and yet they are expected to successfully bid for external funding to drive forward and deliver regeneration in the City.</p> <p>Unison feels these posts should be filled by existing staff as part of assimilation.</p> <p>We also challenge the need for two posts especially the H graded post. This looks like empire building to us.</p>	<p>The job descriptions for these roles will be finalised and the grades confirmed by job evaluation.</p> <p>This will be part of the selection process and staff will have the opportunity to express an interest in them.</p> <p>The roles are to provide essential regeneration expertise which will actively support the work of the City Council. Empire building is irrelevant bearing in mind the context of savings.</p>
<p>Why are existing posts being cut? The one surveyors post has only just been taken on? The proposals all seem rather short sighted?</p>	<p>The reduction in posts is required to meet the cost savings identified.</p>
<p>Concerns have been raised over the fairness of asking the less experienced staff to compete against well-established employees of the council, are they being set up to fail.</p>	<p>Noted. There is no intention to set staff up to fail. The ring-fences have been set to reflect the transition of duties and all appointments will be made on the basis of merit.</p>
<p>When will the JDs and PSs be released for the ring fenced and new positions? Unison feels that staff should be allowed to apply for both ring fenced posts and new posts. Can this please be clarified?</p> <p>If individuals feel they are in the wrong ring fence can they ask to apply for another post within another ring fence?</p>	<p>The job descriptions will be produced once the structure has been approved and staff will be able to comment on them prior to their finalisation.</p> <p>Staff can express an interest in the relevant ring-fenced posts and those that are vacant in the structure. If they feel that they should be ring-fenced to additional posts then this will be considered as part of the process.</p>
<p>Unison members whose posts are being deleted feel they should be considered for posts currently carried out by contractors or agency staff where they have the relevant skill sets. This could result in savings for the council.</p>	<p>There are two contractors engaged within the section, who are working on capital projects. These work streams are not part of the current establishment and are therefore not included in the realignment. However, this may be reviewed if necessary.</p>

<p>The review should include the consultant surveyor post which has been in existence for a number of years, if this post is required then this should be included in the running costs of the service rather than ignored, there is an obvious cost impact to this consultant service and employing an officer full time would be more cost effective rather than on a consultant rate.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>The report mentions working with County and Tewkesbury Council to ease the workload of the proposed single Building Surveyor Valuer. Unison members feel there would be a cost implication in doing this, as neither County nor Tewkesbury are likely to perform work for Gloucester City for free.</p>	<p>Shared work is a recognised practice to access additional resources and to reduce both risks and costs.</p>
<p>Unison members are concerned that there seems to be an assumption that if a higher grade post is combined with a lower grade post, the resulting grade would be in between the current two grades.</p> <p>Unison members would question this assumption on advice from a trained Hay evaluator.</p> <p>When will the hay evaluations be carried out for the new posts and will these be completed before the selection process gets underway.</p>	<p>The grades are indicative and based on an initial management assessment. They will be formally evaluated and the grades set.</p> <p>This will be undertaken once the structure has been approved and the job descriptions finalised. This process will be completed before staff are asked to express any interest in the posts.</p>
<p>The loss of a builder surveyor will have a significant impact on the capacity to deliver, manage and care for the significant number of designated heritage assets and vacant national buildings within the city council's portfolio. Should the council continue to be successful in obtaining HLF funding how will this work be tendered, managed and implemented?</p> <p>The council also owns a number of</p>	<p>The provision of services will continue to be reviewed and prioritised to ensure that all requirements are met.</p>

<p>scheduled monuments which are redundant and again require regular maintenance and management, with the reduction in asset management staff as proposed there is the potential to have a harmful impact on the councils duty to care for these assets which is a prime attraction for visitors and a provides a sense community pride as set out within the Corporate plan.</p>	
<p>Regarding the two new regeneration posts proposed I question as to whether these are necessary in this format and at the expense of other posts. This type of function has had limited success through the work of the regeneration company (GHURC), what is required are additional resources who have expertise in the fields of building surveyors, planners, policy, conservation and urban design who can feed in and produce master plans and policy documents for the many vacant sites within the City and work with developers and interested parties. Officers with experience of bid writing to assist with external funding schemes for the city museums and guildhall, and options/viability appraisal work for the many designated assets which sit within the councils portfolio are desperately required, these types of bids take up a considerable amount of time to put together and deliver if awarded.</p>	<p>Noted. The Regeneration Team will be required to write and submit bids for external grant funding in the same way Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Funding, Local Transport Board Funding and Strategic Economic Plan grant support has been secured for the City by those already experienced in regeneration activity and bid writing</p>