

Decision Session – Executive Leader

Wednesday 27 January 2010

Annex of Additional Comments received from Members and members of the public since the agenda was published

Written representations in respect of Annex 3 to agenda item 4 (Revenue Budget Estimates 2010/11 – Chief Executive’s)

Received from:	Comments:
Peter Weck, Unison	<p>Savings proposal no. CEXES 16 proposes the deletion of one full time Democracy Officer post, reducing the number of Democracy Officers from 5 to 4.</p> <p>The Democracy Officer team provides support for the Council’s decision-making process, servicing a wide range of meetings from Executive Decision Sessions to Overview and Scrutiny Committees. All five Democracy Officer posts are currently filled and each Officer has a full portfolio of meetings to service. Predominantly, the work of Democracy Officers is a statutory service.</p> <p>The proposal, if accepted, would result in a redundancy - very likely a compulsory redundancy. As well as the adverse effect on the person made redundant, this would place a great deal of pressure on the remaining members of the team. The abolition of EMAPs and the Shadow Executive are noted, but EMAPS have been replaced with public Executive Member Decision Making Sessions and more Scrutiny Committees. In addition, 2 more Working Groups are now being serviced by the team.</p> <p>The report to the Executive Leader states that the savings proposals have been subjected to ‘a <i>rigorous assessment process</i>’. However, there has been no prior consultation with unions on this</p>

particular proposal and no information is provided in the report to explain the assessment process. The potential impact of the cut on service delivery is mentioned but not explained. Neither does the report evidence that there is less work to be covered by the team. There is also the effect on the wider team to consider. The Democracy team works closely with Scrutiny and Member Services. A proposal to delete the vacant Scrutiny Assistant post has also been put forward, when plans were in place to fill the post following the increase in scrutiny committees arising from the Council restructure in May 2009. Losing a vacant post in this very tightly resourced team is bad enough but to potentially make an existing member of staff redundant as well, when there are clearly pressing work needs across all the areas which make up Democratic Services, does not make for effective work planning.

In summary:

- this proposal has been poorly thought through in the context of the current and future workload of Democratic Services (incorporating Democracy, Scrutiny & Members Services) as a whole
- there has been inadequate consultation on the proposal with unions and staff; and
- not enough thought has been given to alternative proposals which could achieve the required saving without creating a redundancy.