

18 June 2014

On behalf of Unison and GMB

Management proposal to amend the redundancy and redeployment policy: *(To reduce the current redeployment pay protection of three years, to one year full protection of salary and 6 months 50% protection)*

The redeployment policy was jointly drawn up by HR and both recognised unions. The primary aim being, to minimise redundancy and costs, protect the employee affected by minimising the financial impact, and retain the skills developed over the length of time working for the council.

Unison and GMB are fully aware that in the current climate, there is a need to look for efficiencies, however we believe that the proposed change to the redeployment policy; reducing the length of protection, will have a negative effect on staff, with negligible savings. **Indeed we would ask Members of the committee to note that this matter has already been considered by the Joint Staff Working Group of Melton Borough Council on the 4th April 2014. The Members and other representatives of this group recommended that the current policy should remain and no changes made. Both Unions would kindly ask Members to follow this decision.**

Employee morale has been relatively low over the past two years, mainly down to a number of restructures, employees conscious of the fact that the council is under financial constraints, a three year freeze on pay, job security in the public sector being at an all-time low, and generally feeling the strain of trying to provide a public service with minimum resources.

Both Unions have consulted with members on this proposal, which has already instigated immense opposition. Staff are worried that this is an indication that the council are contemplating significant re-organisations in the near future, reducing posts, therefore the need for an increasing number of staff to require protection. Members have also expressed their resentment, at a time when they are willingly doing more for less, and that on this particular occasion feel the council should be supporting their employees not reducing their financial security.

Both Unions are opposed to this change. Over the last three years it has only been used six times @ a cost of £19,762 per year, this equates to 0.32% of the councils net expenditure. Both Unions believe that the savings are marginal to the finances of the council, but significant to staff affected, the majority being Melton residents, paying Melton Borough Council tax, and spending their salary supporting the vitality of the town, and local businesses.

The proposal may increase redundancy costs; as there is no guarantee that an employee faced with only one year with full pay protection, will accept it as a suitable alternative to redundancy. This may lead to an increasing amount of staff opting for redundancy as opposed to being redeployed into a different post with only one year protection. There will be a loss of skills and knowledge to the council, with additional costs incurred in recruiting and training to the vacant post.

Over the past few years employees have voluntarily taken on additional duties outside of their job description to compensate for posts that have been removed from the establishment, or vacant posts that have not been filled. Surely this kind of committed responsible action requires some kind of appreciation?

The Unions have contacted other Leicestershire authorities to ascertain the details of their pay protection. Seven authorities were contacted and the range of protection ranged from two to three years full protection.