

APPENDIX 4b – UNION SPECIFIC RESPONSES

We appreciate the position the council finds itself in due to the austerity measures placed upon them by Westminster over the last several years.

We are very disappointed to see Extra Care again at risk of being TUPED away from the council after family and staff made their feelings known at last year's proposal and now after the debacle of Carillion highlighting the risks of trusting private companies with such an important task.

The only way that a private company can undercut the cost of council care would be to undercut the terms and conditions of a loyal long term staff group as well as to cut training to the bare legal minimum. This staff group have gone through several years of uncertainty and we are disappointed to see them again as one of the proposals.

Each saving (Cut) being made again puts more stress on an already pressured workforce. As more and more posts are deleted the workloads are shifted to other colleagues to continue to work under the illusion of business as usual.

We would ask that Newport City council look again at the use of reserves to support services already under significant financial and workforce strain while the staffs are attempting to work to the highest standards.

We would also urge Newport City council to be open to exploring alternative ways to make the most of financial resources within the council.

We as a Union will always challenge outsourcing of council services especially when it affects those least able to look after themselves.

We ask that Newport city council continue to robustly challenge the Assembly and Westminster over what the real term costs of these cuts are to the community within Newport and not allow the financial dictates from London further impact on our City and those who live within it.

Peter Garland Branch Secretary

Newport City Unison



Wales and South West Region

24 January 2018

Newport City Council
Cabinet/Full Council

GMB Submission to Cabinet and Full Council – 2018/19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The GMB trade union have now had an opportunity to consult with our members across those areas most affected by the latest proposals by the Council to make savings within the 2018/19 Budget and MTFP.

We acknowledge the severity of cuts facing Newport City Council is significantly caused by the continuation of Central Government's austerity cuts to the public sector, combined with the uncertainty of the final grant settlement. We equally acknowledge the pressures on the Council's budget which require new investment but this should not be at the expense of essential public services.

However, in the current climate of continuing reduction in staffing levels yet the expectation from central, regional government and local authorities of providing the same level (and in many areas) a requirement for continuous improvement across council services with less staff, is both unrealistic and unachievable.

Each year for the past 3-4 years Extra Care Services' staff have received a 'thank you' note from this council arriving just before Christmas informing them their service is being considered for outsourcing to a private provider in order to save money. The impact this is having on this specific group of staff who are predominantly part time women workers is catastrophic. The constant threat of being outsourced to another provider not only has a detrimental impact upon their working life but also spills over into their personal lives. It is not good enough for the Council to say they value the work they do – and then offer them up year upon year as financial sacrificial lambs – it is nothing short of a form of harassment by their employer.

Please see below our submission from last year (dated 31 January 2017) submitted to Cabinet and Full Council:

'Proposal to Outsource the Council's Domiciliary Care Service provided in the Linc Extracare scheme

Having now had the opportunity to meet with a number of our members across the four Linc Extracare scheme our members are bitterly opposed to being outsourced. The amount of saving over 2017/18 and 2018/19 is £140k. There is no breakdown as to how these savings would be made.

However, NCC have included an extra:

*£137k for adult social care demographic increase;
£400k for underlying/historical demand for adult social care services;
£447k cost of paying NMW to council contractors, mainly social care;*

As one 'not for profit' care provider told me when they took over a group of domiciliary care workers and failed to follow the TUPE transfer regulations. The new provider was given a 'dowry' for the staff, if they pursue their claim the provider will just close that part of the business – all for a maximum payment of four weeks pay if the failure to consult is upheld. Is this type of treatment really what the council wish for their loyal care staff?

On a national basis, private/voluntary/not for profit care providers are accusing local authorities of not paying them enough to provide the care and be able to pay their workers at a reasonable rate.

The GMB has been informed the rationale for proposing to move forward with the outsourcing of this group of predominantly part time women workers, is the alternative care provider will run the service for £14 per hour instead of the council's £17.28 per hour. This is quite surprising as nationally a figure of £15 per hour is considered too low for most external care providers.

Has the council drilled down to identify how much of the £17.28 per hour per carer is 'top sliced' with corporate charges – finance, payroll, HR, legal, premises, utilities, management costs etc? The reduction in this departmental/corporate funding will also have a knock on affect upon these 'backroom' services/staffing levels, yet we do not see any information detailing the potential impact upon these services.

Already our members have been given new job descriptions which now include 'sleep ins'. This was never in the previous JD and our members feel they are just being 'packaged up' to be sold off. Is this the way NCC treat a group of dedicated, committed and loyal staff, when there is no indication any savings will be achieved in the short/medium/long term.

The GMB would urge the Council to reconsider before progressing with this proposal.'

In this year's budget proposal for Domiciliary Care Service provided in the Linc Extracare scheme there are apparently savings forecast (by outsourcing) in the region of £150k for 2018/19 with a further £150k for 2019/20 yet in the business case it clearly states that 'a costing exercise has demonstrated that an outsourced model would save the council £300k per year with £1.3m transferring to the community care budget to cover the cost of commissioning a contract with a provider to deliver the service.

The GMB would like a copy of this 'costing exercise' in order to understand how outsourcing a service can save money when you still have to provide that service albeit on a commissioning basis.

There are some good private sector/not for profit providers but they can't deliver a service for nothing and any cuts made by the council's commissioning the service, will have to be paid for through a reduction in employment costs.

The GMB's experience is, it is only through the external provider reducing terms and conditions of staff that such significant savings can be achieved. Staff then leave and continuity to the tenants are lost – is this really the model NCC is pushing for? If it is not then there is no need to outsource your dedicated and trained staff.

I understand that NCC have already had first-hand experience of private sector organisations walking away from care contracts because they are no longer financially viable – the council is then left with having to find alternative care provision at short notice or place people into short term residential care until a provider is sourced.

GMB members tell us the decision to separate Frailty from Extra care has resulted in the lack of cohesion between the two services and the opportunity to maximise both services efficiently and effectively. Again there appears not to be any follow up/monitoring of this change to services in order to get tangible feedback as to whether or not this is working and meets the proposed target which cabinet and council based their decision. Why has the council not tracked these changes?

How will moving to an external provider ensure consistency of staff supporting the tenants, at a lower cost to the council?

The GMB has requested the unit cost of our in-house service and those of a comparable external provider which has been used to illustrate these savings in the budget/MTFP. It was stated recently that our in-house costs have soared to as much as £22 per unit. Unfortunately GMB have been denied access to unit cost as Service Manager considers it is commercially sensitive information. We are therefore submitting a FOI request. However we consider this approach by the council to be obstructive and it is clearly meant to prevent GMB from representing its' Members who work within Domiciliary Care in the extra care schemes who do not wish to be the subject of a TUPE transfer.

As you will see from last year's statement to Cabinet and Full Council the in-house unit cost was in the region of £17.28 per hour against a private provider's unit cost of £14 ph (presumably that is what the council is looking to pay). What happens to the central costs which are currently being 'top sliced' off this internal budget? Who will pick up the additional cost? Usual practice is for these costs to be 'absorbed' across the remaining in-house council services bumping their unit costs up so they then become 'too expensive'.

What about the impact on central services eg HR/Finance/Payroll/Legal etc if there is a reduction in staffing levels (57.22FTE) will probably attract a head count of over 100 actual staff leaving the employment of the council. A significant number of staff not requiring central services input.

Social Care is in crisis and has been in 'melt down' both regionally and nationally for too long. Successive government's keep going on about this Cinderella service but do not do anything to support it.

The Domiciliary Care Service provided in the Linc Extracare scheme was heralded as a more innovative way of providing care; enabling people to have their own front doors and not have to be moved on when they developed a need for care – providing a 'wrap around' service with both the council and other health providers working cohesively. It was seen as a better way of living and enhancing quality of life. Within this latest business case it emphasises **'this business plan supports Improvement Plan priorities, Newport a Caring City – supporting independent living for older people and ensuring that people have the right social services'**

What about your dedicated staff – don't they deserve support and a caring employer?

We are all aware of the recent events of Carillion and what is happening there, when so many public services are being provided by a private organisation and hearing about the individual stories of people not being paid and finding themselves out of work through no fault of their own.

We had a similar situation a few years ago in the private sector when one of the care giants – Southern Cross went out of business due to their property services organisation becoming too greedy. Sadly this continues to be the case but with some of the smaller providers still seeing the council as a 'cash cow' but the reality is those days are long gone.

Explore income generation

The GMB believe there are many ways to make the service more cost effective. Talking with members they have raised the possibility of offering people living out in the community access to assisted bathing; reintroducing laundry and shopping services; organising activities for the community as well as tenants all at a cost to generate income into the service. Another proposal is for NCC to work with other neighbouring councils to work as a collective whilst keeping the service in-house.

Request for Councillors to meet with staff

We would like to extend an open invitation to all councillors in addition to the Leader and Cabinet to come along to the centres and meet with staff and hear what their views are on this continued decision to outsource their service before making the decision

The GMB would highlight the impact this continued situation is having on staff and their overall wellbeing. Each year for around the last 3-4 years they go through this process of not knowing whether or not they will remain working for the council. Each year it is just before Christmas when they are told yet again they may be outsourced. It has a significant impact on them and their families: many members have told me how each year they don't know whether or not they can afford to buy presents for their family as they do not want to work for a private provider – they chose to work for the council and are proud to be a council worker. We are all aware that TUPE does not always result in continuity of staff.

Please let's work together to keep the service in-house and stop this year on year uncertainty!

As stated previously, the GMB acknowledge the financial difficulties facing NCC especially as it appears the council is being penalised for having more families in work and reducing the areas of deprivation across the city, at the same time being penalised for having more new domestic properties attracting more retail/commercial businesses to the city.

The GMB would urge the council to look for more income generating streams in order to increase the budget rather than solely focus upon cuts to vital services.

Overall Impact upon Staff Health and Wellbeing

Many departments are facing huge problems just trying to deliver a standard service with an ever decreasing workforce. This in itself is having a massive impact upon those staff who are left to meet unachievable targets/deadlines. The GMB believe the impact of some of these ongoing budget cuts will also impact upon the overall health and wellbeing of staff and will also result in an additional cost to the council which needs to be captured.

Rowena Hayward
Membership Development Officer

Lyndon Clarke
Branch Secretary



Wales and South West Region

29 January 2018

Newport City Council
Cabinet/Full Council

Additional GMB Submission to Cabinet and Full Council – 2018/19 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The GMB trade union have now had an opportunity to consult with our members across those areas most affected by the latest proposals by the Council to make savings within the 2018/19 Budget and MTFP.

OUTLINE OF OAKLANDS SERVICE

Oaklands is a residential unit that offers short -breaks to children and their families that live in the Newport area. The unit is the **only** short -break service in Newport. The service offers young people the opportunity to spend time away from their families and carers in a safe, stimulating environment. The children that currently use the service have many different needs. Many of the children are on the Autistic spectrum and have conditions associated with Autism i.e. sensory issues, challenging behaviour, communication problems) all of the children have a learning disability and many also have a physical disability. Several have profound and multiple disabilities with complex health conditions that are known to be life limiting.

The house has five bedrooms, two of which have downstairs facilities. At present there are 30 plus families using our service, we understand there may be a waiting list to use the service; each bed is used most nights. Children are given a level of respite following panel decisions of the families need, they are then given a monthly allocation of stays and these are planned according to their needs and the compatibility of others within the house. The house is presently operating seven days a week for twenty four hours per day, we only close at Christmas and recently have closed on some bank holidays.

The children continue their schooling whilst having respite; we transport them all to their schools during term -times.

The staff team comprises of nineteen residential child care workers, working full or part -time during day shifts and a team of night care workers, part-time admin and domestic staff. To meet the needs of the children Staff work morning and afternoon shifts over seven days following a two week rota, many of the children are assessed to require one to one support during the day, - some also need two to one support in community settings. At night two waking night staff are required to meet the many needs of the service during the night.

It has come to our attention that there are proposals to reduce the service to five days a week, GMB strongly object to this for the following reasons.

- The service is a much needed provision, it is the only residential provision in Newport for the families, the needs of their children are met by a skilled, established team that have built up good, supportive relationships with both the children and their families .
- The children have planned overnight stays, their carers need this planned break to rest, to 're-charge' , and to spend time with their other children
- The stays are planned with the children's needs taken into consideration, i.e. staying with other young people that have the same interests, or some children need a quiet environment therefor would be able to stay with a quieter group. Having a five day service would greatly reduce the opportunity for young people to stay with others whose company they enjoy.
- Many of the children have extremely challenging behaviour and great consideration is made when and with whom these children stay, to ensure the safety of the more vulnerable children - if a five day week is in place again this give less scope to accommodate compatible children.
- There have been many instances that young people have needed to stay at the unit at short notice or for an extended stay. (For example -parent or carer has become unwell, parent is struggling to cope, a safeguarding issue, a family emergency etc) and there is no alternative service or family members to support the family.
- Has the Authority considered the children of the future? The diagnosis of Autism has increased and children with complex needs/ rare genetic conditions are living longer and fuller lives.
- It is anticipated that reducing this service will prove to be dreadful short sighted decision and the impact would be that more families will break down and need to have full time residential care for their children, a costly provision.
- Retained carers that were employed by the authority to offer respite in their own homes are no longer a residential resource.

The staff team are obviously concerned about these proposals and its impact on the families, a meeting with managers and families last week was understandable very emotive.

Presently staff have not had any formal notification of any proposals or the opportunity to attend a meeting to discuss these issues, GMB would like to ascertain what this proposal would mean for the staff team and how can they work effectively if the service is reduced to five days

The following questions require a response please:

- Does this mean working more weekends, evenings and more unsociable hours?
Concerned that this will impact on work/life balance for all. Child care for some of the team is obviously a huge concern.
- Some of the part-time workers have other jobs or are studying; a change in work rotas and shift patterns would have a huge impact on them.

- Will they be made to work at other residential settings /alternative units that are a completely different care setting that has a different statement of purpose and require staff with different skills and training?
- Will staff be offered redundancies?
- Staff want to ensure continuity of care – to continue their essential Link working with parents, schools, health care professionals and other specialist support workers. Staff want to maintain these relationships and partnership working , working over five days only would mean the level of communication and co -working would be seriously reduced, impacting on quality of care
- Staff contribute to reviews and core group meetings held during the week and may not be able to attend, verbally contribute and support families and service users.

Overall Impact upon Staff Health and Wellbeing

Many departments are facing huge problems just trying to deliver a standard service with an ever decreasing workforce. This in itself is having a massive impact upon those staff who are left to meet unachievable targets/deadlines. The GMB believe the impact of some of these ongoing budget cuts will also impact upon the overall health and wellbeing of staff and will also result in an additional cost to the council which needs to be captured.

Rowena Hayward
Membership Development Officer

Lyndon Clarke
Branch Secretary

Regional Office: Garley House, Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0TB
Tel: 029 2049 1260 Fax: 029 2046 2056