

Annex 1

Review of Finance Service

Information & Consultation Document

Date: 25 August 2022



Oldham
Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following a Decision by Cabinet at its meeting of 24th January 2022, on 1st April 2022 the business and assets of the Unity Partnership Ltd (Unity) transferred to the Council.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Report identified that in order to support the recommended approach, £1.3m should be provided in the Council's 2022/23 budget on a one-off basis to support the additional costs linked to any requests to join the GM Pension Fund, terms and conditions and other transitional arrangements. It was proposed that this would be funded from Council reserves in the first instance with the expectation that the efficiencies and opportunities to redesign service delivery will effectively fund this investment over a two-year period.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Several roles within the former Unity Finance Service transferred over to the Councils Finance Directorate. The posts falling within this function area can be seen at Appendix 2. One of the main functions of the former Unity team concerned the preparation of the monthly management accounts of Unity Partnership Limited, together with completing statutory obligations such as ensuring compliance with Companies Act requirements, filing annual accounts and taxation returns.
- 2.2 Since the transfer of Unity to the Council, the team has been responsible for the preparation of the statutory accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022. These accounts have now been prepared and the audit substantially completed. The accounts are expected to be signed of in the first week of September.
- 2.3 Going forward there will be no requirement to prepare monthly management accounts and minimal work be required to fulfil statutory obligations. The proposal is therefore to delete the finance-related posts within the service. This will achieve a saving of £181,600.
- 2.4 The role of Schools' Account Manager within the team is broadly unchanged following the transfer to the Council and no changes are proposed to this role at this time.
- 2.5 In the context of the deletion of the Unity finance roles, there are currently the following vacancies within the Finance Department as set out in the table below.

Role	No of Existing Vacancies
Assistant Director Finance (Capital, Transformation & Special Projects)	1
Senior Accountant	1
Accountancy Assistant	1

The proposed implementation strategy is outlined in Appendix 4.

3. Information & Consultation

- 3.1 Over the next 30 days we will be undertaking a consultation process with you (affected staff, and the recognised Trades Unions) regarding these proposals in order to;

- Provide detailed proposals;
- Consult with you on the impact of these proposals;
- Listen to your feedback and consider any comments you have about the proposals;
- Consider any alternative proposal(s) put forward by you which meets the identified objectives;
- Minimise/negate the need for compulsory redundancies where possible

To enable the above, we:

- Have provided full details in this document of the implications for both posts and people and a timeline outlining the key stages of the consultation and implementation process;
- Will hold a group consultation meeting with you (affected staff and representatives from recognised Trade Unions) to provide an outline of our proposals and rationale, and provide you with a copy of this document
- Will hold an individual consultation meeting with you (affected staff and a chosen representative where applicable) during the consultation period
- Will provide mechanisms for you to feedback any questions, comments or suggestions during the consultation period

Staff are able to volunteer for redundancy, efficiency release or reduced working hours during the consultation period, in order to minimise or negate the need for compulsory redundancies. All expressions of interest from staff will be considered, but there is no guarantee they will be accepted. Consideration needs to be given to the cost to the Council, the need to retain key skills and the service's ability to continue to provide a quality service etc. A voluntary redundancy payment is the same as a compulsory redundancy payment. Staff should be aware that it may not be possible for a decision to be made on voluntary requests until the end of the implementation process.

3.3 The following documents are appended:

Appendix 1	Guidance on Implementing a New Structure
Appendix 2	Current structure
Appendix 3	Proposed structure
Appendix 4	Proposed implementation strategy
Appendix 5	Current job-descriptions
Appendix 6	Equality Impact Assessment

3.4 Formal written responses should be sent to Anne Ryans by 6 October 2022.

4. Timetable

4.1 During the consultation and implementation process, it is proposed to take steps to ensure that staff are dealt with fairly and consistently and that uncertainty for all concerned is minimised as far as possible. Therefore, a framework of key actions has been developed and is outlined below:

Date	Action	Tasks
6 th September 2022	Commence information & consultation process	Proposals issued to affected staff (including absent staff) and TU representatives at a local and branch level on day 1 of the process. Add staff at risk to tier 2 redeployment register.
	Hold initial group consultation meeting(s)	Initial meeting with all 4 directly impacted staff. Initial meeting with all staff and TU representatives to explain proposals and take initial feedback. Expressions of interest considered from staff for voluntary options (e.g. Efficiency, redundancy, reduced hours).
7 th September onwards – the minimum 30 days consultation from start date of formal consultation on individual options would end on 5 th October 2022	Hold individual staff consultation meetings	Individual 1-1 meetings to be held with staff who are potentially directly affected by the proposals. At this meeting the individual impact will be discussed e.g. slot-in, ring-fence, at-risk, redeployment processes, support which is available to them and how this can be accessed e.g. outplacement scheme. Feedback should also be sought at this meeting exploring whether there is any interest in considering any voluntary options.
	Opportunity for further group or individual consultation meetings, <u>if required</u>	Staff and TU's given the opportunity to meet again with management to discuss the proposals further and/or provide feedback on the proposals.
6 ^h October 2022	Date by which formal consultation will be completed	Collation of feedback on implementation proposals.
14 th October 2022	Consideration given to feedback and proposals reviewed in light of this. Provide feedback to staff and TU's on all comments made	

Date	Action	Tasks
17 th October Onwards	Approval process	Prepare Delegated Decision report with relevant comments and submit for approval. Prepare report for any applications for voluntary options.
	Preparation for implementation	Communicate with employees this can be done subject to or after approval process. Gain approval of the report and obtain approval of VR/ER reports.
	Implementation process (from mid- October)	Slot-in (where appropriate) Ringfence, interview and appoint (where appropriate). Meet with individual staff who are displaced or who are identified as being in a selection pool and follow selection criteria process as set out in the Redundancy Policy. Agree end dates for VE/ERs. Conclude implementation process. Confirm start date for staff appointed to new structure. Confirm redundancy selection with those staff that have been displaced together with outplacement support.
31 st October	Notice Periods to run from 31 st October. Note that full year savings will not be achieved this year.	Put on tier 1 redeployment.

5. Conclusion

5.1 All feedback must be provided by the end of the consultation period to be considered (this date is outlined in the timeline above).

If staff have any alternative proposals which meet the stated objectives, we would encourage these to be raised as early as possible in the consultation period to give managers as much time as possible to fully consider these.

If you require additional information, please seek assistance in the first instance from your line manager.

Appendix 1

Guidance on Implementing a New Structure

Redeployment Categories:

Implementing a new structure may create changes in numbers and/or types of role which result in two categories of redeployee:

Tier 1: These are staff who are on formal notice of compulsory redundancy and whose employment will cease by reason of redundancy at a specified date. The full Redeployment Policy provisions apply to these staff. For this, please see the Redeployment Policy on the Council's intranet.

Tier 2: These are staff who are identified as potentially at risk of redundancy but to whom notice has not and may not be given. These post holders will have access to the Council's Outplacement Service and to the stage ring fencing arrangements applicable to their circumstances as outlined in the section 'WHEN TO RINGFENCE' below.

Consultation:

Meaningful and timely consultation with employees and trade unions should take place as soon as proposals have been determined. This should certainly take place before the implementation process commences and should include implementation methods and timescales. Where implementation may require the use of the redundancy selection criteria, the proposed criteria should be consulted with staff affected and the unions in advance of the process being undertaken.

There are legal requirements which must be complied with particularly in situations where 20 or more redundancies are proposed. Advice from the Unity Human Resource Advisory Service should be sought in any potential redundancy situation.

When to Delete a Post (or Posts):

A post may be deleted where:

- Work of a particular kind attached to that post has ceased and the post in its existing form (i.e. in terms of hours, job description and grade) no longer appears in the structure.

Or

- Work of a particular kind has diminished and there are fewer posts with such work in the structure.

When To Select For Redundancy

Where there is a reduction in work of a particular kind (i.e. fewer posts than there are substantive post holders) and staff interested in voluntary release are insufficient in number, the Council's redundancy selection criteria should be applied to reduce the number of staff to equate to the reduced number of posts in the revised structure.

For guidance the selection pool should consist of those employees who otherwise would have been slotted into the post following the restructure, had there been a sufficient number of posts.

When To Regrade or Redesignate a Post:

Jobs naturally change and evolve over time to reflect developments in service provision. Where a post is reviewed as part of a restructure, and it is identified that the duties of the post have changed since the post was last reviewed, then this may warrant a review of the grade or job title. In such circumstances, the post will be reviewed under the job evaluation scheme and, on the basis that the post is not fundamentally changed and comprises at least 70% of the pre-review duties and responsibilities, the substantive post holder may be regraded within one grade (up or down) and /or re-designated. This will not apply to situations where an employee has covered or acted up into another post. For more fundamental changes to positions, posts will be deleted and replaced by new positions and the guidance in this document will be applied to determine the means by which any new positions are filled.

When to Slot in:

Employees can be slotted into a post where:

- There is little or no change to their existing post.

Or

- Where the post has been amended to include new duties and responsibilities but these do not change the overall role (their work of a particular kind). For general guidance, this means 70% or more of the role and broad level of responsibility remains unchanged). This constitutes a variation in contract.

And

- The number of such posts is the same or increased but not reduced.

Note: For clarity, where the duties and responsibilities of 2 or more posts are incorporated into 1, slot in can only happen where 70% or more of the duties of an existing post comprise the 70% or more of the content of the new post.

When to Ringfence:

The following staged approach should be applied:

Stage 1: Where posts have been deleted and the individuals are at risk of redundancy, they are entitled to be ring-fenced to a new post in the structure where this new post contains elements of the duties and responsibilities attached to the previous role. For guidance, the Stage 1 ring-fence would apply to individuals where between 50% and 69% of the new position is made up of duties that have transferred from the previous role(s).

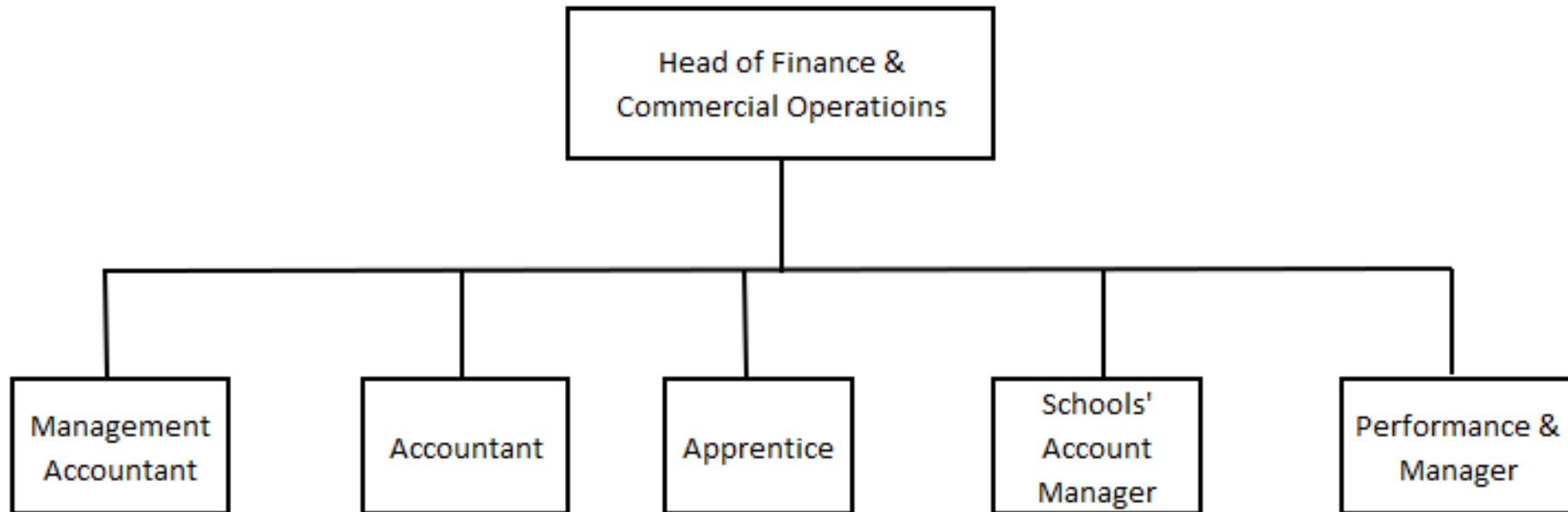
Stage 2: Where an individual or group of individuals are at risk of redundancy but have no claim under STAGE 1 of this process, they are entitled to be ring fenced to vacant new posts as long as the new post is up to or including their current substantive grade i.e. it is not a promotion.

Stage 3: New and vacant posts may be ring-fenced to the group of employees within the service under review if it would assist with creating movement and alternative vacancies within the structure and which in turn may avoid a redundancy within the service.

Notes: Ring-fencing to mitigate risk will happen prior to the posts being available for wider Redeployment or being advertised via the Council's normal recruitment process. Ring-fencing will not happen where it is clear it will not avoid a redundancy.

Posts left unfilled at the end of this process will be subsequently circulated, initially in accordance with the Council's Redeployment Policy and then advertised via normal recruitment procedures.

Appendix 2: Current Structure – Unity Finance Team



Appendix 3: Proposed Structure

There are no posts remaining within Unity Partnership. Treatment of individual roles is described in Appendix 4.

Appendix 4: Implementation Proposal

Role	Postholder	Proposed Treatment	New Grade
Head of Finance & Commercial Operations	Chris Kelsall	Ringfenced for Assistant Director (Capital, Transformation and Special Projects)	AD2
Accountant	Vacant	Delete Post	N/A
Management Accountant	Yewande Adegoke	Ringfenced for Senior Accountant	Grade 9
Apprentice Accountant	Alexandria Gough	Ringfenced for Assistant Accountant	Grade 3
Schools' Account Manager	Iain Cash	To be reviewed under job evaluation scheme	Pending job evaluation
Performance & Governance Manager	Vacant	Delete Post	N/A

Appendix 5: Job Descriptions for potential new roles



JD schools account
manager



JD Asst Accountant



JD Snr Accountant



AD of Finance
Capital Transformati