

UNISON response to Council budget proposals 2018/19

Cardiff Council has proposed a budget with cuts that are likely to be far reaching and in many cases could cause long term damage to services, employees and the public. While we acknowledge this is a consequence of reduced funding from Central Westminster Government we call on Cardiff Council to explore all possible alternatives to cuts with these damaging outcomes for both the people of Cardiff and council employees.

We believe that compulsory redundancies are avoidable, and UNISON will always consider taking action to protect our member's jobs under these circumstances. However voluntary redundancy and deletion of unfilled posts is not without consequences.

Those that remain in their jobs will have to do the work of those that have left. Many employees are already struggling to keep up with their increased workloads before these cuts are imposed and this pressure reflects itself in chronic stress levels that result in lowering morale, productivity and increased sickness levels.

City ops

SAVINGS £1.294m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 4.8

There are no compulsory redundancies planned, but we await the effects of the on-going re-structure on existing posts.

Communities, Housing & Customer service

SAVINGS £7.09m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 3.0

Mainly focus on income generation from various support services including meals on wheels, removal of subsidiaries, changes to in-house services and better use of grants. Also includes deletion of 3 vacant posts – 2 benefit officers and 1 community care aid worker and a 3 year phased reduction in CAB funding which will now be provided externally. Lastly a removal of neighbourhood partnership funding admin costs.

UNISON supports the use of services for income generation but will oppose any cuts to services and/or terms and conditions for its members including job losses in the form of compulsory redundancies. While we appreciate the deletion of vacant posts reduces risk of redundancy any loss of post can impact on the workload of remaining staff.

Economic Development

SAVINGS £2.85m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 2.0

There are many challenges facing the service area, especially those areas of public service that are not required by legislation and/or statutory obligation.

The Directorate has suggested a number of changes, including some restructuring, the deletion of vacant posts and income generation which, if successful, may allow all existing staff (that would choose to) to continue for another year. UNISON will work with the Council towards that outcome but reserves the right to use any, and all, legitimate means to oppose changes that lead to compulsory job losses or the reduction in terms/conditions for its members.

Education (EG)

SAVINGS £1.198m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 7.0

Income generation review for additional traded services following a review of pricing across school meals, music services and Education psychology together with further marketing to other LA's.

Delegation of Pupil referral budget to secondary school and responsibility for license payment (such as copyright) to individual schools budgets. We welcome an expansion in high quality council run nursery provision to reduce spend on private nurseries

Delete 7 posts in central staffing achieved through restructure in Directorate from March 2018, some grant funded. We will continue to oppose all compulsory redundancies, but are unable to respond fully without further details of the proposed restructure.

Legal, Resources and corporate management

SAVINGS £1.346m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 15.3

UNISON have general concerns around the savings achievability, given the current vacancy provisions impact of deleted vacant posts and with internal income generation being presented as savings and the optimism in regard to generating external income from councils as hard pressed as ourselves. Also in some cases the anticipated increased activity/ income generation ability of a reduced workforce. It is to be hoped that digitalisation will achieve the savings anticipated.

UNISON have serious concerns regarding line 38 (CW1) Council Wide digitalisation The corresponding 'FTE' field says TBC, and Cabinet Portfolio field indicates 'council-wide'. We believe that the total job losses for Corporate Management should also say TBC, not 0.0!

Social Services

SAVINGS £5.040m JOB LOSSES (FTE) 0

There were £5 million savings to be made in this social services budget. UNISON welcomes that no job losses are required this time around, in contrast to recent years.

Tony Young director stated that roughly half the savings would come from prevention and early intervention, the other half from a review of external spending. As well as this there would be an increase in costs to service users in line with Welsh Government policy.

The achievability of these savings does seem to present a challenge to social services and that is indicated by their "red-amber" status on the document we were given.