

Trade Union and Workforce Responses to Consultation on Budget Proposals Agreed for Consultation on 23 January 2019 with Moray Council Response

UNISON RESPONSE		
Proposal	TU Response/Feedback	Council Response
Schools and Curriculum Development	<p>Classroom Assistants: Concern about the distress and upset caused by consulting on proposals for Classroom Assistants which were then changed based on information which would have been available to senior departmental management prior to the initial proposal having been agreed, demonstrating a lack of value or care for emotional wellbeing of the workforce.</p> <p>Concern about information on proposals being available on social media before some employees finding out through official channels. The Council needs to understand how fast information can be disseminated to affected staff and have procedures for cascading information promptly.</p> <p>Music Instruction: Concern that the service will become inaccessible to poorest households denying children the chance to learn an instrument and develop creative abilities. Query whether the Council can provide some funding to ensure that no child misses out on these opportunities.</p>	<p>As discussed at the JCC on 07 February, it is accepted that clarity on the budget position with each specific school would have been preferable before the decision to proceed with the proposals was communicated to staff, however the council recognises and values the role of Classroom Assistants and would always aim to ensure the emotional well-being of the workforce is of paramount importance, especially during difficult times.</p> <p>The agreed channels of communication as part of the council normal change management procedures were used, however the council is always seeking ways to make improvements and any specific suggestions are welcome.</p> <p>Those on lowest incomes have access to free lessons and this will not change.</p>
Lifelong learning, culture and sport	<p>Community action welcomed, however, concern regarding the decision to close the Lossiemouth swimming pool at a time when a new pool is to be constructed in the next couple of years which should be profit making.</p> <p>Concern regarding the sustainability of using Fit Life membership rates as they are volatile and can be</p>	<p>The difficult financial circumstances mean the council has to make significant savings in a very short timescale.</p> <p>The council continues to seek ways to boost the commercial viability of the leisure facilities in Moray e.g. increasing the membership of Fit Life within the local community, alternative commercial operating models. While the increase in Fit Life memberships is helping to</p>

	<p>cancelled at short notice. Additional concern regarding the capacity of the current facilities to meet the expectations of the increased membership.</p> <p>Review of position of the Active Schools Co-ordinators is welcomed however query why posts are not funded 100% from Sport Scotland.</p> <p>ESOL: Concern about removal of unique service in this area for basic English teaching and request reconsideration of transfer of service to Moray College. Concern regarding incomplete staffing information and process of verification of those staff affected by proposals. Recognition of assistance ESOL classes provide to migrant citizens and the wider benefits associated with this related to employment prospects, social harmony and reduced reliance of translation costs.</p> <p>Libraries: Amended proposals welcomed, however concern regarding changes proposals based on financing information that was already available to the council.</p>	<p>increase the commercial viability of swimming pools and leisure facilities, it is recognised that this is going to require constant monitoring and will be kept under review, including ensuring an appropriate balance between the levels of membership and the capacity to meet the demand this creates.</p> <p>While the funding for the Active Schools Service is part funded via Sport Scotland, this is on the basis of match funding whereby if the council is unable to meet the 'match' element the funding from Sport Scotland becomes unavailable.</p> <p>The possibility of transferring the service to Moray College has been considered and has not been possible to progress. This is not within the scope of the council to influence further. As discussed at the regular weekly meetings with HR and at the JCC the council very much regrets this occurrence and has provided a formal written apology to the employees concerned. The process for validating the accuracy of information is also being reviewed. The council notes the comments and recognises the benefits the ESOL classes provided.</p> <p>It is accepted that clarity on the budget position for libraries would have been preferable before the decision to proceed with the proposals.</p>
Integrated Childrens Service	Educational Psychology: Concern about possible increase in stress and workload and provision of satisfactory service.	As noted in the response to this query provided on 30 January, this was a vacant post and as such the main responsibilities had already been reviewed, prioritised and where appropriate re-allocated.
Direct Services	Waste Management: Extension on consultation for this therefore no comment at this time.	Consultation information has been provided to all staff affected by the waste management proposals.

	<p>Building Cleaning: Concerns noted in previous consultation (increased risk of infections and disease, increased sickness absence, impact on those in receipt of working tax credit) and overall detrimental impact on school and staff.</p>	<p>The concerns regarding the personal and wider financial impact on employees are noted.</p> <p>Cleaning will be focused on the areas most likely to contain the spread of infection and disease (e.g. touch points such as handles) as reduced floor cleaning does not contribute to the spread of illness or absence and therefore impact on attainment.</p> <p>Consideration of seasonal impact will also be reviewed as part of that process with the points raised fed back to service managers for their consideration.</p>
Development Services	<p>Concerns about the level and timing of information available to staff for meaningful consultation with lack of detail on structure, costings and how change will be implemented. Raised at regular HR/TU meetings and at JCC and request extended consultation.</p>	<p>Assurance has been provided (6 and 13 February) that the majority of the changes on the paper in question have been the subject of previous budget or committee papers with appropriate consultation and that the document had been provided as a useful summary of the staffing changes and the senior manager has been invited to meet with the TUs to respond to queries and concerns.</p>
General	<p>Concerns regarding the impact of proposals on the local community, particularly the most socially disadvantaged as feel they are disproportionately impacted. Concerns about the quality of the Equality Impact Assessment documents and lack of mitigation offered.</p> <p>Concern that that managers will expect the work to be picked up by remaining staff. Request that managers are clear that this is unacceptable and there is already evidence of many hours of additional work being undertaken unpaid and unrecorded, which masks the level of staffing required to deliver local government services to an acceptable level.</p>	<p>An assessment has been carried out to consider the cumulative impact of proposals and none was identified. Baseline information has been provided on users of services where this is available, although for some more general services this is not routinely collected. However, consideration has been given to the impact on protected groups for all proposals.</p> <p>The Council is reducing the size and scale of its operations to reduce operating costs. All proposals have been considered based on the understanding that the future service delivery and impact on remaining staff in terms of what is manageable will be reviewed. All proposals have been considered in the context of which elements of the services have to continue, done in a different way, reduced or stopped with appropriate prioritisation and reallocation against remaining resources. The council is very aware of</p>

	<p>Concern about lack of decision making, issues relating to unique geography of the area, underfunding of local government budgets. Proposed national day of action being planned via the STUC (and through Moray Trades Council).</p>	<p>the responsibilities of managing the ongoing provision of services to the community in a way that meets obligations including ensuring manageable workloads for employees. Specific work is also being undertaken to develop additional ways to help improve management of workload as part of the ongoing drive to improve workforce culture.</p> <p>The council is cognisant of the difficulties related to the funding of local government within Scotland and the UK.</p>
EIS RESPONSE		
Reduction of DSM	<p>Concern that the budget proposals contradict Moray Council's own policies and aims (e.g. Devolved School Management) and the impact on achievement and attainment with decreasing budgets, staffing shortages and dwindling resilience of current staff. Also concern regarding the lack of consultation on the freezing of monies carried forward by schools and restriction on spending will have a detrimental effect on the improvement agenda in schools and ultimately impact on the achievement and attainment of pupils.</p>	<p>Careful consideration is given to the viability of each saving proposal to ensure the council retains the capacity to meet its statutory obligations. The challenges of doing this with decreasing budgets, staff shortages whilst continuing to ensure the health and well-being of the workforce are recognised and acknowledged, however the council is committed to ensuring it continues to strive to meet its obligations and priorities, despite difficult financial circumstances and to respond positively where areas for improvement have been identified.</p>
Increase in class sizes in P2 and P3	<p>Disappointment at the detrimental impact on pupils achievement and attainment. Concern at real terms reductions in Additional Support Needs funding and more pupils not receiving the required support. Concern about the impact on future years as well as current difficulties of larger class sizes.</p> <p>Concern about the impact of the loss of NQT posts on recruitment to the area.</p>	<p>While the ability to cater for smaller class sizes has been the preferred option for some time, the proposals do allow the council to comply with national guidance on class sizes. Where additional support needs are identified, appropriate support will be provided.</p> <p>Whilst there will be a reduction in the number of newly qualified teachers requested, the council will continue to invest heavily in the development of a significant number of newly qualified teachers and will make every effort to encourage both NQTs and other teachers new to the area</p>

		to settle and continue their careers in Moray.
Classroom Assistants	Concern that removal of classroom assistants is clearly in breach of agreed SNCT guidance and the impact on teachers doing tasks that they should not be doing, impact on already unmanageable workloads and request review of provision of admin support to with clear guidance to ensure there is no expectation on teaching staff to complete them.	Assurance was provided on 30 January that any reduction in Classroom Assistant time will not result in work being reallocated to teaching staff.
Active Schools	Concern that removal of service detracts from opportunity to school pupils in Moray contradicts some of the aims Corporate Plan 2018-2023 – will the Corporate Plan be amended accordingly?	The council's Corporate Plan is regularly reviewed to ensure the aims are consistent with the capacity of the council to deliver on those aims.
Technical Assistants	Concern about who will do the residual work left by reduced Technical Assistant resource.	Assurance was provided on 30 January that duties would be reallocated within schools and across technical teams as appropriate. While the impact may be different in each school depending on how the saving is implemented the overall impact is likely to be similar, however this will be monitored with mitigating actions developed if required.
Increase in Music Tuition Fees	<p>Concern that access to instrumental music is becoming a lottery and believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.</p> <p>Concern about the loss of wider benefits of music to young people's attainment and wellbeing.</p> <p>Concern that any increase in the cost of music tuition will reduce the number of pupils who will be able to afford to access it.</p>	The council recognises the universal value of music and music tuition and tuition will continue for those pupils who choose to pursue music as part of their academic career.
	<p>General Notes</p> <p>Concern that the savings proposals are making some subjects unaffordable and likely to disappear from the curriculum and the proposed cuts will impact on Moray's ability to:</p>	Despite challenging circumstances, the council is seeking to ensure it retains the capacity to meet its statutory obligations. The challenges of doing this with decreasing budgets, staff shortages whilst continuing to ensure the health and well-being of the workforce are recognised and acknowledged, however the council is committed to ensuring it continues to strive to meet its obligations and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close the attainment gap between most and least disadvantage children • Improve children and young people's health and wellbeing • Improve employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all people. <p>Request more detail on ICS management restructure proposals about how the cuts will be achieved as have concerns over whether Moray are fulfilling the aim of Getting it Right for Every Child and meeting the legislative requirements of the Education (additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act (2004).</p>	<p>priorities, despite difficult financial circumstances and to respond positively where areas for improvement have been identified.</p> <p>This consultation exercise relates to proposals impacting on Integrated Children's Services agreed for consultation on 23 January 2019 and this relates to the removal of a 0.5 vacant post in Educational Psychology. Previous proposals relating to a management restructure within ICS were agreed at Full Council on 12 December 2018 and are proceeding to implementation.</p>
UNITE RESPONSE		
Schools and Curriculum Development	Concern about increasing class sizes whilst reducing classroom assistant posts and lack of foresight regarding budget underspends.	While the ability to cater for smaller class sizes has been the preferred option for some time, the proposals do allow the council to comply with national guidance on class sizes. Where additional support needs are identified, appropriate support will be provided. Careful consideration is given to the viability of each saving proposal to ensure the council retains the capacity to meet its statutory obligations. The challenges of doing this with decreasing budgets, staff shortages whilst continuing to ensure the health and well-being of the workforce are recognised and acknowledged, however the council is committed to ensuring it continues to strive to meet its obligations and priorities, despite difficult financial circumstances and to respond positively where areas for improvement have been identified.
Direct Services	Concern about the reduced school cleaner hours and impact on community.	The concerns regarding the personal and wider financial impact on employees are noted. Cleaning will be focused on the areas most likely to contain the spread of infection and disease (e.g. touch points such as handles) as reduced floor cleaning does not contribute to the spread of illness or absence and therefore impact on

		attainment.
General	Concern regarding the low wage economy and the contribution the budget savings are making towards this, particularly amongst the lower paid areas of the workforce.	Moray Council recognises that the area is what is commonly termed a 'low wage economy' and has demonstrated a clear long standing commitment to ensuring every employee has a reasonable income through paying the Scottish Local Government Living Wage since 2012. The savings proposals have impacted on all sections of the council's organisational structure.
WORKFORCE FEEDBACK		
Active Schools and Sport Development	Concerns regarding the value and importance of the service with regard to health, physical education and community support. Suggestions for alternative savings in schools and senior management, increasing fees for Fit Life, reducing working hours, income generation through different business model approach.	Acknowledgement and responses provided.
Schools and Curriculum Development	Concerns regarding the crucial nature of Technical Assistant posts to the successful functioning of the whole schools. Disproportionate impact on Technical Assistant staff compared to the previous proposals relating to Technicians.	Acknowledgment and responses provided.
Libraries	Concern regarding closure of library including impact of using library as reception service for gym users.	Acknowledgment and response provided.