

## Appendix C

### CULTURE, LIBRARIES AND LEARNING – UNISON RESPONSE TO BUDGET CUTS AND ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

#### Management Response to Unison Comments

##### **Redundancies**

We recognise the difficult financial situation the Council is currently in; however, we are formally restating our complete opposition to compulsory redundancies as a way of achieving reductions. It is our belief that the Council should be operating a joined-up approach to managing change. This should include creative use of “bumping” to facilitate voluntary redundancy applications and avoid compulsory redundancies. There should also be proactive consideration of options such as voluntary reductions in hours, flexible working, etc. Where staff support such options, the normal “business case” process for approval should not be applied, given that the aim is to avoid compulsory redundancies.

**We are doing our best to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies as much as possible.**

##### **Site Managers**

There are currently 2 site managers at Wood Green Library. We believe that the reduction to 1 could create significant health and safety risks.

There are a large number of incidents at this library involving members of the public, including theft and problems with gangs, and the Site Managers are expected to deal with these. Currently, the second site manager on duty acts as a back-up and support during these incidents. This is essential given the nature of some of the incidents that occur. If 1 site manager now has to deal with these incidents alone, then that worker could be put at risk.

The amount of tasks that site managers carry out at Wood Green mean that it will be impossible for them to be done by one person. This is because of the size of the library and the number of visitors it has. If the number of Site Managers is reduced, then this will put excessive pressure on staff on the counter, which in turn will impact on the work they are meant to be doing. Site Managers at Wood Green often have to move around large items of furniture; it will not be safe for one staff member to do this alone, so please clarify how this issue will be dealt with. Also, how will large deliveries be dealt with? For example, photocopying paper usually arrives in boxes of 50. Will one person be expected to deal with this? The lift at Wood Green breaks down approximately 3 times a month and can be out of use for a few days. When this happens, Site Managers have to escort library users with disabilities in the goods lift (as they cannot use this unaccompanied). Although there is no problem with doing this, the issue is that at the moment when one Site Manager does this, the other is carrying out other tasks. This will be much more difficult with only one Site Manager, and the likelihood is that many tasks simply will not get done due to lack of time.

Hornsey Library currently has a Site Manager on duty all the time that the library is open. There will now be no-one on duty between 11.30am and 4.00pm. Please clarify who will deal with the issues that Site Managers usually deal with in this period. As with Wood Green, this may create excessive pressure on other staff.

There are classes/events that take place at Hornsey and finish at 12.30pm. These take place in the gallery, which is supposed to open to the public at 1.00pm. However, there will be no Site Manager on duty to deal with clearing away chairs, tables, etc. at this time. Please clarify how this will be dealt with. It will not be reasonable to expect other library staff to do this.

Management have stated that Site Manager cover at St Ann's will only be provided "when essential." This library has events on a regular basis, sometimes several a week, so please clarify how this is going to work. It will not be reasonable to expect library staff to carry out site management tasks at St Ann's.

Events help to promote a positive image of libraries and some of them also bring in revenue, and Site Managers work hard to facilitate these. However, in order for these events to take place, an appropriate level of site management support needs to be provided. If management want to cut this, then it may be the case that the current level of events cannot be maintained. I understand that management have considered using agency security guards to cover some of the tasks of Site Managers. It is unacceptable to be considering the use of agency staff to replace staff who could be made redundant, and it is difficult to see how this will save money. Security guards may not carry out all the tasks that a Site Manager does.

It is proposed that Site Managers will not start until 8.00am. However, in some buildings cleaners start work at 7.00am. Who is going to unlock the building to let them in, and who is going to be responsible for the security of the building between 7.00am and 8.00am?

Site managers usually work in one building only. If they are expected to work more flexibly, they will need training and familiarisation with regard to the different buildings.

Please provide copies of the risk assessments that have been completed in relation to the reduction in site managers. If these have not been completed, then this needs to be done as soon as possible.

Given the concerns raised about this, it is clear that management have not talked to Site Managers about what they actually do and that they have not attempted even the most basic analysis of what work is done by them and how many people are reasonably needed to do it. We believe that management have simply failed to take into account the amount of work that Site Managers do, and have underestimated the importance of this work to the smooth and safe running of Libraries. They sometimes struggle to do the amount of work that is expected of them with their current staffing levels, and this will become even more difficult if there is a staffing reduction. Please note that it will not be reasonable to simply expect other library staff to carry out the tasks that are currently carried out by Site Managers.

Overall, we believe that management will not be able to provide the required level of site management services if this staffing reduction is approved, and that this could lead to health and safety risks for both staff and library users.

We understand that one Site Manager has applied for voluntary redundancy and that another is due to retire soon. Given that this is a reduction of two posts, and given the potential risks of reducing staffing in this team further, we are proposing that there are no further cuts beyond this. Management should also explore whether staff would agree to cutting their hours to so that redundancies can be avoided.

We have taken account of representations from Unison and have now discussed this issue in detail with the Site Managers and with other library staff. In order to strengthen Site Manager cover, we are therefore proposing to add back in a 0.5 post (weekdays only). This has the advantage of ensuring that at the Central Library site manager lunch breaks are fully covered and that there is a regular period of overlap where two members of staff are available for tasks specifically requiring two people; the Senior Site Manager is also able to give assistance as at present.

The additional post will also provide Hornsey Library with longer hours of cover – until 1pm on most days to ensure that the Gallery can be readied for public opening. We will look at scheduling events/classes around the times that Site Manager cover is available if this type of support is necessary to support the activity.

When the public lift is out of order it is not only site managers who can escort library users who need to use the goods lift. Other members of staff can (and do) assist library users in this way if a site manager is not available.

The proposal for site managers at Hornsey Library to start at 8 am will be possible as the keys for the building will be given to Corporate Property Services who provide the cleaning services in our buildings. They have already requested a set for the cleaning supervisor to enable cleaning staff to start before 7am as happens in other council buildings.

Training will always be provided where needed for any site manager working in a less familiar environment. However all site managers are appointed to the service and are expected to work flexibly as many do already.

### **Senior Librarians**

We understand that no-one in this ringfence is now at risk of being made redundant, which is welcome, but we would like confirmation of this in writing.

We are pleased to confirm that no Senior Librarian is at risk of being made redundant at present. One redeployee from HALS is currently working on a fixed term contract but this does not end until September 2012.

Staff have not expressed any strong opinions for or against the creation of a generic Senior Librarian role and job description. However, there are a number of issues that need to be clarified. The staff in this ringfence currently carry out different roles. Some are Branch Managers, and the rest specialise in different areas. If there is to be a generic role, please clarify how this will work. For example, is it envisaged that the new Senior Librarians will both manage branches and do specialist work? Will they be peripatetic or based in one place? If the new structure is implemented, how will it be decided who goes where? If staff are going to have to do work that they do not have previous experience of, then training will need to be provided. If it is envisaged that staff in post will simply continue to do what they are doing now, then please explain the purpose of having a generic role.

Having consulted with staff, we do not feel that it is appropriate to proceed with the creation of a generic job description at this point in time.

Children's Librarians have been excluded from ringfence, but we understand that a Children's Librarian has been given a Branch Manager post at Muswell Hill. We need clarification on what process has been followed here. It is extremely concerning that one person who was not in the Senior Librarian ringfence was given a job that other staff in the ringfence may have had a legitimate claim on, especially when there was

a potential redundancy in this ringfence. Also, we understand that there is an acting-up Branch Manager at Stroud Green. With regard to Branch Manager posts, it is a matter of great concern that one staff member appears to have simply been given a post (at Muswell Hill), and another is acting up (at Stroud Green), when there is a permanent staff member who is only in a temporary post as a Senior Librarian at Coombes Croft, and who therefore may face redundancy when the post comes to an end. This creates the worrying possibility that staff are being treated differently, to the detriment of some and the advantage of others.

We needed to reduce the Children's Librarians from 4 to 3 across the borough. At Muswell Hill, unlike any other Branch Library there were 2 SO1 posts i.e. a Branch Librarian post and a Children's Librarian post. This situation was unsustainable and unjustifiable in the current financial climate and so the decision was taken to delete the Children's Librarian post based at Muswell Hill. The Branch Librarian at Muswell Hill requested voluntary redundancy and this provided us with an opportunity to avoid a compulsory redundancy by offering the role on a bumped redundancy basis to the Children's Librarians. One of the Children's Librarians agreed to take up the role and so this has been successfully achieved.

No staff have been appointed to vacant posts. Any permanent vacancies that arise will be recruited to using Council procedures. The person acting up at Stroud Green library is covering for the gap at SO1 level created by the maternity leave of the Children's librarian at Hornsey library.

In relation to the staff member currently based at Coombes Croft, we are pleased to confirm that she will be included in any ring fences which apply to that level of staff.

#### **Library and Information Officers**

These are front line staff who are essential to the effective running of the service. Given the importance of these roles, we are requesting that management do not implement this cut as the savings will be negligible

The staffing reductions in this area will be obtained entirely via voluntary redundancy. We are proposing to reduce this tier of staff by two library and information officers and feel that this reduction can be managed.

#### **Mobile and Housebound**

A Library Assistant/Driver post will be cut. It is stated that "the impact of this will be minimised by the more regular involvement of the Community Programmes Officer: Wellbeing and Access in the direct delivery of Mobile and Housebound services." Please clarify what this means. It seems to mean that the stated postholder will be expected to carry out the duties of the deleted post in addition to those of their own post. It is not acceptable to cut posts and simply pass the duties onto somebody else, who will already have their own full workload.

Assistance in service delivery is already part of the Community Programmes Officer: Wellbeing & Access's role. The post holder will contribute more regularly to service delivery and it is recognised that this will result in less time to be spent on other activities.

#### **Stock Section**

I have not had any comments from staff about this. However, the proposal states that the postholders will be given the opportunity to apply for VR, and if they do not do this then it will be assumed that they will both be expressing an interest in being considered for the remaining 0.5 post as a suitable role. This does not appear to

follow the correct procedure. If someone works full time, for example, then they may choose to take a 0.5 post but they couldn't be forced to. Not taking VR would not necessarily mean that they had accepted that this was a suitable post, and any staff in such a position should be offered the opportunity to have a period of redeployment if that is what they want, in line with council procedure. They should not be forced to go for the post. However, this all depends on what the staff involved say they want and I am happy to have further discussions about this if necessary.

It may be helpful to clarify that we have received requests for VR in relation to 1 post. There will be no necessity for members of staff to reduce from a full-time to a part-time position.

### **Library Managers**

We are concerned that Marcus Garvey will no longer have its own Library Manager. This appears to be the latest in a series of attempts to downgrade the status of this site from being a main library, as the other 2 main Libraries will still have Library Managers. The Library Service Delivery and Development Manager will apparently take on the responsibility for managing the library. However, given the extent of this post holder's other responsibilities, it is difficult to see how managing a main library can simply be added on. We believe that the result will be that there will not be sufficient management capacity in this library.

The Library Service Delivery and Development Manager is confident that she has sufficient capacity for this task.

### **Sunday working**

Following the 2007 restructure in Libraries, an agreement was reached at JCC regarding Sunday working, which was that staff should only work 1 in 8 Sundays. The current proposals will require staff who do not currently work on Sundays to start doing so. Our view is that the existing agreement of 1 in 8 Sundays still stands and that these staff should not be required to work more than this, unless they clearly state that they are willing to do this.

Given that there is a planned reduction in Sunday opening, please clarify what will happen to staff who only work on Sundays (if there are any).

There are no members of staff who work only on Sundays. We do not anticipate Library and Information staff having to work more than one Sunday in 8. Site Managers were not covered by the previous agreement and will now be required to work one Sunday in 4.

### **Job description and candidate specification comments**

#### **Senior Librarian**

*To work reasonable additional hours as necessary to meet targets and complete tasks.* This is unreasonable for staff at this level and should be removed.

Management should ensure that the work that the postholders are expected to do can be completed within their normal hours of work. Staff are under no obligation to work additional hours, and doing so regularly can create significant health risks.

*To occasionally deputise for the Library Manager or Senior Operations Manager as and when required and to provide support as necessary, including day-to-day management of the library and staff.* It is not reasonable to expect the postholders to routinely have to cover for other staff. The word "occasionally" is used, but the use of the phrase "as and when required" strongly suggests that this would be more than "occasional". In terms of Library Managers, these jobs are graded at PO3, and it is

not acceptable for SO1 staff to be forced into deputising for them in addition to doing their own jobs. This is because of the stress that the additional responsibilities will cause, and also the gap in the grades. Management should ensure that there are sufficient staff at each level to ensure that this requirement is unnecessary.

*To undertake any other reasonable duties within your competencies as required by the Head of Service, Library Service Delivery & Development Manager, sometimes at short notice to achieve the basic objectives of the Council. Any other duties that staff are asked to undertake should be appropriate to their grade and relevant to what is already contained in their job description. The overall workload that is given to staff needs to be reasonable.*

Please clarify why tasks relating to children are included when Children's Librarians are excluded from this process.

**At this point we do not propose to introduce a generic "Senior Librarian" job description.**

#### Museum and Archives Officer

*Management appear to have included duties in the job description that seem to be inappropriate for the type of role and the grade. It seems that the postholder will be expected to cover duties that would formerly have been carried out by a Museum Attendant or a Site Manager. Examples include:*

- To assist members of the public in their use and enjoyment of facilities, with general information, interpretation of displays, explanation of facilities and with directions, and operation of equipment (e.g. stair lift) as necessary*
- As Duty Officer (on a rota), to lead for the service in covering reception desk duties, meet and greet visitors and those hiring facilities, patrol and supervise all areas to which the public are admitted in accordance with set procedures;*
- To carry out duties set out in procedures manuals/documents to safeguard the safety of the public and staff, and well-being of collections and facilities;*
- To ensure an efficient service by helping to monitor all safety and security procedures and test equipment as required;*
- To be responsible as a Duty Officer on a rota for the opening and closure of the Museum and to act as a key holder;*
- To assist with the implementation of emergency procedures.*
- To assist in the moving of any furniture and equipment to ensure that proper facilities and equipment are available for the public and staff, including booked meetings.*
- To work as part of a team on a rota to prepare rooms for lectures or meetings, assisting at evening and weekend meetings when necessary and clearing up after use (including preparing tea and coffee by arrangement).*

It is unacceptable to fill a job description with an excessive number of duties to compensate for cuts in other posts. Management are requiring that the postholder has a degree, and the post is graded at SO1, yet the job description has several requirements that would be typical of a much lower graded post. In reality, this is an

unreasonable attempt to put at least two completely different jobs together, and management need to reconsider this.

*To undertake any other reasonable duties and responsibilities within your competencies as required by the Assistant Director of Culture, Libraries and Learning Service, Library Service Delivery & Development Manager and the Resources & Performance Manager, sometimes at short notice to achieve the basic objectives of the Council, the Directorate and CLLS.* Any other duties that staff are asked to undertake should be appropriate to their grade and relevant to what is already contained in their job description. The overall workload that is given to staff needs to be reasonable.

*To work reasonable additional hours as necessary to meet targets and complete tasks.* This is unreasonable for staff at this level and should be removed. Management should ensure that the work that the postholders are expected to do can be completed within their normal hours of work. Staff are under no obligation to work additional hours, and doing so regularly can create significant health risks.

*To undertake any other weekend and evening work as required to ensure service delivery.* Staff are not obliged to work outside their contractual hours, or over and above whatever agreement has been reached about evening and weekend working, so this should be removed.

The candidate specification asks for a degree. Management guidance states that qualifications should only be asked for if they are a legal requirement, or if they are essential to the post (e.g. a professional qualification). Please explain why it is essential that the postholder requires a degree. If management are not able to do this, then this requirement should be removed.

The Museum has always been a small team of people who work together to deliver the services at Bruce Castle. This means that all staff, from PO4 to Scale 4, need to know how to - and actually do - carry out these front-of house duties. For the higher grade posts this is not on an everyday basis currently but it is sufficiently regular in order to cover leave, sickness, training, team meetings for the museum attendants' post. For the past 7 months, all members of staff have been involved in covering the front of house duties on a rota since the deletion of the third Museum Attendant post.

For this new job description, this role will continue to be part of this routine and the duties listed will be part of the Duty Officer's role. This means that all staff will be rota'd for a week to carry out and lead on these front-of-house requirements. Each officer will therefore be the Duty Officer every 5 weeks during the working week, to work with and support the remaining Museum Attendant and professional staff to deliver these services.

A suitable level of education is required to ensure that the staff recruited to this post are able to carry out the duties relating to the protection and managing of the historic and unique collections. As an Accredited Museum we are required to maintain national standards. It would therefore be possible to say that a degree or equivalent is desirable rather than essential.

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