



TOM Stage 2 Consultation Response

UNISON is submitting this response to the Stage 2 Target Operating Model consultation on behalf of the Aberdeen City Branch.

APPENDIX 1: INTERIM FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

At this time the structure offers little reassurance to employees. In some cases, there are terms which resemble existing teams, but advice from management has been that this may not mean the people currently fulfilling those roles. This makes it difficult for employees to understand where they fit into the new structure of the organisation and how their jobs may be impacted.

Several sections of the structure revert to previous ways of working. In many cases these were changed because they did not deliver successful outcomes – these lessons don't appear to have been fully learned.

Customer

While many services in this function do not raise concerns, there have been some specific examples where members are worried about the impact on their roles.

The internal helpdesks within the Customer Contact cluster are not readily interchangeable with the external customer support provided by the Customer Contact Centre. In cases such as the IT Helpdesk, there is very little customer contact of this nature – instead, a professional first-line incident management function is provided which aligns directly with the IT function. If the only change here is line management, then the service is better provided as a part of the IT function to ensure less duplication and reduction of silo working.

Some statutory roles within the function will need to be carefully managed. Examples of other local authorities attempting to combine certain statutory roles with more general customer service positions have not been approved by central regulators. For example, the Registrars must be qualified and registered with National Records Scotland. This is a role which cannot be combined with any other in the Customer function. National Records Scotland has refused to approve combined roles in other authorities due to the lack of expertise and the need for a dedicated registration service. In addition, Aberdeen City has the busiest Registrars' office in Scotland with only a small team to support this demand.

Concerns have been raised with UNISON that the description of Registrars and Bereavement Services together has become commonplace. Bereavement Services provide support to the Crematorium and are a core part of that function. This is a distinct contrast to the death registration role of the Registrars – both services have raised this as an issue.



Commissioning

Given the broad role of the Commissioning function, it is unclear whether all other services will be “commissioned” by this function or if this relates specifically to services falling under Operations.

Wider discussions have highlighted the need for an additional independent team within Commissioning to support in-house bids for services. UNISON believes that public services work best when they are delivered by the public sector. They cost less, support local jobs and better conform to our values. It is the Branch’s position that all services should have the independent specialist support needed to prepare an in-house bid for any work which is being considered for tender. These bids must be evaluated fairly and considered prior to engagement with the market. Even at the stage of an external tender, in-house services should be permitted to submit further bids.

Operations

Concerns about the placement of Education and Children’s Social Work within this bigger function have been raised. The TOM commits to aligning the way the Council works to the LOIP outcomes, which feature specific objectives around children’s services. There is a risk that incorporating this significant part of the Council’s business reduces potential oversight as an education authority. Given that “Governance” and “Place” have broken out of the four-function model in the proposed structure, the same consideration should be given to Education and Children’s Social Work.

This function appears to be the services which are likely to be at highest risk of being commissioned externally given the proposed relationship between the directorates. This presents significant risk to the bulk of Council activities, especially where business cases have already begun for the purpose of looking at alternative options for delivery (e.g. fleet management and facilities).

Resource Management

There have been significant concerns raised about the role of IT within this function. As the service has spent much time looking to consolidate IT activities and improve the way it delivers its services, these proposals appear to scrap that work. The division of IT into three directorates (Digital Place to Place, IT Helpdesk and Digital to Customer, the remainder in Resource Management) creates the possibility of further duplication of activities.

Moreover, the proposed interim IT restructure within the service does not show a clear fit into the structure proposed in this consultation. The two appear to have been developed in isolation and create unnecessary anxiety for our members. In particular, the two interim structures potentially result in job re-evaluation and re-grading taking place twice within a short period.

As a case study of what other structures might look like within the proposed clusters, it offers a troubling picture to our members. There has been poor consultation with



Trades Unions on the IT structure and an inability to demonstrate that any feedback has been actively considered.

Governance

If this service is considering policy, risk and assurance roles, we would be interested to understand where HR policy will sit. The functional structure would suggest that HR policy and industrial relations is better placed within Governance than People & Organisation. UNISON doesn't take a particular view either way, but would like clarity on the impact here.

Place

UNISON has no specific comments on this function.

APPENDIX 2 – APPROACH TAKEN TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRUCTURE

While it is appreciated that the high-level structure has considered the input of senior management through a range of methods, UNISON is concerned that this does not reflect the reality of how services operate. This approach makes the assumption that all senior roles have the same complete understanding of their day-to-day staff activities; our evidence shows otherwise. It is widely accepted that most, if not all, Council employees carry out additional duties of some kind due to changing demands of customers, management or legislation. Equally it is possible that a simplified view of what services deliver may have led to some of the conclusions about best fit within the interim functional structure.

Members have raised these concerns directly with management through the consultation exercise, at transformation stalls and with UNISON representatives. The level of transparency surrounding the discussions has created a challenging environment where employees do not feel listened to, are concerned for their jobs, and believe their voices are not being heard by management.

APPENDIX 3 – POTENTIAL CHANGES TO SENIOR ROLES

These proposals do not raise any immediate concerns for UNISON. We recognise that in many cases Tier 2 managers will have significant changes in responsibility, not just a change in their title. However, it has been noted that the number of Tier 2 managers is likely to increase from the 12 being disestablished (or 14 prior to VSER) to 17. Similarly, the increase in Tier 1 level positions creates a difficult argument for “shrinking the workforce” anywhere else in the organisation.



APPENDIX 4 – JOB MATCHING PROCESS FOR SECOND TIER

UNISON has no specific comments on this appendix.

APPENDIX 5 – APPROACH TO WORKFORCE CHANGE

Where roles are “in-scope”, UNISON asks that Trades Unions are consulted prior to informing employees so as to determine:

- Whether the role should really be in scope based on feedback and expertise which Trade Unions can offer;
- How to prepare to support members through the process by having information available from the start.

There have been some examples of business cases for workforce change which have not followed a clear transformation governance process on the first attempt have prevented effective Trade Union involvement from the start. For example, where a business case has been submitted to Strategic Transformation Committee before any other delivery or control board.

APPENDIX 6 – SUMMARY OF STAFF ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

UNISON has received feedback about the staff engagement sessions from our members. There have been a number of recurring comments which we believe management should address:

- The information provided at each session has been different and often conflicting;
- Some employee concerns have been dismissed out of hand instead of addressed;
- Very little information was disclosed and has caused greater anxiety amongst members;
- Fundamental assumptions about how a service is delivered or should be delivered are being made without having engaged those delivering them;
- The sessions have themselves contributed to a more uncertain environment.