

UNISON has been afforded very little time to comment on this paper – just three days. The original draft we were sent contained inaccuracies that meant we have needed to revise our response late within this timeframe after they were brought to our attention.

Assuming that the totality of organisational changes referred to fall within the Public Protection Partnership, we have been appraised of the proposals that affect staff directly.

We have not been made aware of any other staffing implications, so the assertion of “union consultation” is accepted with this proviso.

Clearly, decisions made indirectly affect all staff, and wider ramifications across other services can be expected from any organisational change – the nature of such ramifications remain indistinct. Workload does not seem to be diminishing but rather is potentially being condensed and divided among fewer posts, as we have seen before.

In terms of the Council Tax rise, we are broadly supportive in the sense that an increase will go some way to addressing chronic and continuing central government underfunding, but we expect this to allow the authority to maintain an operational stasis at best, or for it to be swallowed by ever-spiralling social care costs at worst. This is a drop in the ocean that will do little to redress the damage done by previous cuts across many services.

UNISON notes the claims of “investing in public services” and the attendant “end of austerity” from the Prime Minister, and wonders when meaningful evidence of either might actually materialise.

Thanks

UNISON West Berks

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019