

1. A) **The current post of Head of Resources is being arbitrarily carved up to fit in Customer Services.**

There is nothing to suggest that this is the case. Rather the proposal brings together elements of both roles into one.

- B) **Why isn't Customer Services being reviewed in its entirety? It is already evident that the role of CSAs has changed, by default this must mean that other roles within and managing this service have , and will continue to change and minimise in their need . this means we are duty bound to ask Is there a role for a Head of Customer Services at all?**

The Head of Resources and Head of Customer Services posts are being deleted and a new role created that will support our customers when they present for financial support and advice. There is a need to ensure one of the senior roles within the organisations provides a strategic and coordinated approach to customer care.

2. **What is the rationale for moving service areas across directorates (HR and OD service) and where is the consultation? Has the relocation of HR & OD been fully explored? Is the proposed site the most appropriate or logical?**

The transfer of the HR & OD service to transformation will ensure that as systems thinking and change continues within the organisations that staff are supported to manage the change and have appropriate skills and training to deliver the newly designed services. The link between the transformation and HR&OD will continue to address the support needed by staff in the future. In relation to the consultation, I have directly consulted with those potentially at risk of redundancy and the recognised trade unions, and in addition I have circulated the proposed structure to relevant 4th tier managers as I felt this was appropriate.

3. **Why are two current Heads of Service being summarily moved to other disciplines? Are they qualified in these fields? In particular, how can a customer orientated post suddenly cover financial requirements without any qualifications?**

The new HOS role has responsibility for the overview of financial support to the customer through the benefits and revenues systems and not technical financial management and therefore financial qualifications are not required. In addition the suitability of whoever is appointed to the new role will be rigorously tested as part of the selection process.

4. **Why is the Financial Services Manager not at risk, when there are actually two members of staff potentially able to apply for the post, according to the Council's policy and practice? The current HoS should be able to cascade down to that post, why is this not written in to or acknowledged in the review?**

This issue has been considered and it is felt that the current proposed approach is consistent with that taken by the Councils in previous reviews and;

- it has not been past practice or custom to widen (or ‘cascade’) the redundancy pool further down the structure
- the proposed restructuring is concerned with reducing the number of enabling Head of Service posts, rather than lower level posts
- in the circumstances, it would be unreasonable to extend the redundancy pool to include a permanent employee whose role is not fundamentally changed or affected by the proposed restructuring

5. Can a reduction in workload be demonstrated which justifies the loss of the major financial post within both Councils? Would it be more cost effective to lose a Director?

As is the case in all service reviews and restructures the workload has been assessed to ensure that the capacity across the organisations can meet the demand. The proposed structure is not about responding to reduced workload but instead seeks to achieve greater support to the strategic purposes. In addition providing efficiencies across the services and reducing costs of enabling services to protect those posts that create value to the residents. As you are aware both Councils continually review their service provision to ensure that the management arrangements supporting the services are appropriate regardless of what level.

6. Why are timescales so tight? We understand that the Financial Services Manager has already been advised by letter that her new post will commence on 1st August, which was initially before any interviews, and in any event before consultation had finished. How can this be? This demonstrates that consultation is a farce and decisions are made without due consideration.

It is clearly stated in the letter that the appointment is conditional upon the outcome of the consultation exercise and that everything could yet change in the light of the Councils’ consideration of the representations made by Unison and others. No changes to posts were to be implemented before the end of consultation or consideration by Members. For clarification the consultation period ended on Friday 12th July.

7. Transformation, which should be a common sense, routine part of the role of any good manager in keeping their service on target, is an area of high expenditure. Why is this not being reviewed? Should it be a separate service in perpetuity? And at what cost? Is there a requirement for a Head of Transformation at all?

The Council continues to address and realign financial pressures where possible. The Head of Transformation also manages the ICT and performance teams. The initial cost of transformation has helped develop redesigned systems and the transformational team will continue to support the delivery of savings to meet future financial pressures.

8. Would it not be better to look at services holistically? This review seems to single out an individual rather than legitimately target a service in need of change that is being expedited by other departments entering into, or currently going through “transformation” .

The review has not singled out an individual, it has objectively reviewed the structures that relate to those Heads of Service who are responsible for enabling services across the

organisations and proposed a revised structure to support one of the strategic purposes of the Councils.

9. **What about the outstanding VR/flexible retirements within Finance? Surely a fuller review of this area is merited and indeed warranted in terms of financial savings in redundancy or pension costs. Currently, for one deferred voluntary redundancy the cost would be approximately £21,500 and no other associated costs. The flexible retirement in question has been agreed, therefore there is no cost, but a saving. Why cannot this post and the duties taken out of the flexible retirement post be combined to create a new post, then the current Financial Services Manager could cascade to that post, utilising natural wastage, limiting cost implications, and maintaining savings, continuity of service and, crucially, jobs, with a salary saving dependent upon the salary appointed at? When will the current proposals realise savings, given the cost of the current proposed redundancy? Our proposal could potentially save up to 90% of those costs. (please see detail below)**

It is accepted that there is a potential significant cost associated with one of the postholders currently at risk. The requests for voluntary redundancies was made to mitigate the impact of compulsory redundancies from service reviews required to meet the shortfalls in funding that both Councils have within the medium term financial plans. The revised Unison proposal is considered below however it is important to recognise that the current level of voluntary redundancy requests do not meet the required level of savings and therefore the current proposal together with the agreement of the voluntary redundancy would deliver increased savings.

10. **The costing's of the existing and proposed arrangements are not clear, either financially or in terms of posts. Can we have a breakdown?**

Current Structure :

Head of Finance and Resources	£93k
Head of Customer Services	£80k
Head of Transformation	£93k
Head of Legal and Democratic Services	£93k
Financial Services Manager	£66k
TOTAL CURRENT COST	£425k

New Structure

Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	£93k
Head of Transformation and Organisational Change	£93k
Head of Legal and Democratic Services	£93k
Financial Services Manager	£69k
REVISED COST	£348k

NET SAVINGS £77k to be shared between the 2 Councils

REVISED PROPOSALS FROM UNISON

Detailed below are the current proposals from Management and the UNISON proposal

Management Proposal for New Structure (not including HR and OD proposed to sit under transformation H of S)

Current cost £425k

Cost £348k

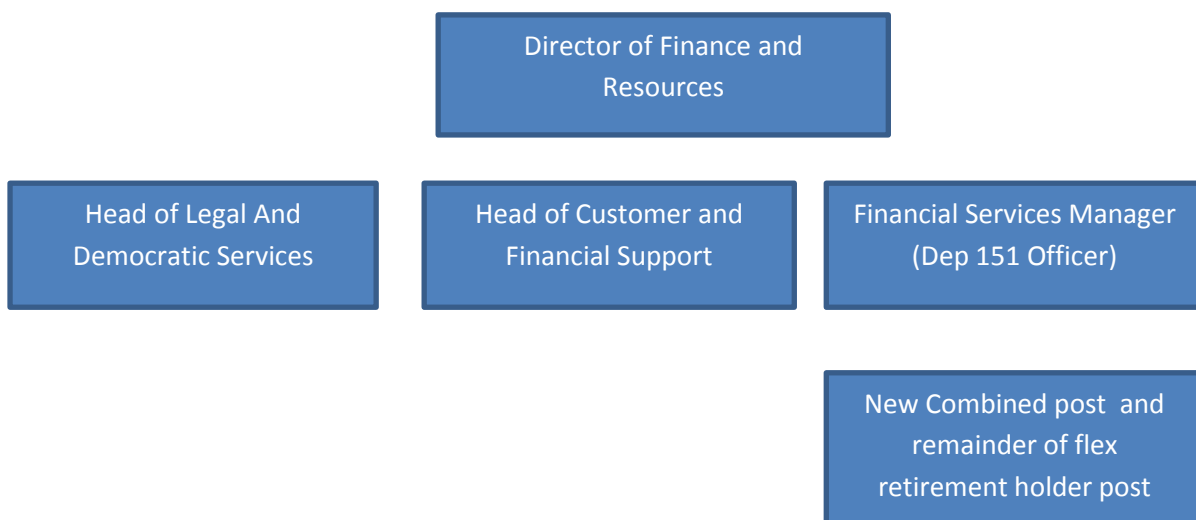
Saving £77k

The 2 posts that could be combined, currently cost approximately **£78k** per year bringing the proposed service to a cost of **£426k (current service cost of £503k)**

Redundancy costs vary between **£30k** and **£221k** !



Union Proposal creating a new combination post from the Deferred VR Request and the 2 days from the Flexible Retirement(agreed) request



Cost for 3 director reporting posts **£348k** (as in report / business case for review) plus the cost of a new combined post (reporting to FSM Post) at a salary of **£47k** (approx.) and the remainder of pay for the flex retirement post holder (**£25k**) totals **£420k**, **£6k** less per annum than the management proposal, plus the **£77k** savings generated as in the business case report totals **£83k** savings per year. Redundancy costs for this proposal **£21,500k** a proposed saving on redundancy costs of between **£8.5k** and **£199,500k**!

This is just the monetary savings (hugely important I know) but staff morale and the utilisation of natural wastage (already agreed and wanted) would go such a long way to ensuring people do not feel targeted as individuals, it will make people sit up and see that the common sense attitude exists and that we do look for ways forward without imposing situations onto staff and that we only impose when there is no other option available.

If The current Head of Resources was successful in securing the new Head of Service role then Sam Morgan could slot into the FSM role if the current Head of Customer Services was not able to be ring fenced for that post and the combined post could be recruited to internally or externally?

We would welcome your thoughts, comments and if this option can be looked at and if not we would like the reasons why it can not be looked at as an option..

Response:

It is important to consider when establishing a new post the definition of the roles and responsibilities that the post will undertake. Following the review of the structures within the enabling service as part of the report there is no current evidence to demonstrate that a new post is required at this level. In particular with the commitment to reduce enabling costs this would not be supported by the additional post being created. The proposed structure aims to support the needs of the organisation with clarity of the posts required and to align the resources to where the posts are creating most value to the community.

Whilst the potential costs may be deemed as being significant the level of savings will be realised to meet these costs in future years. In addition if the comparison with the proposed structure and the UNISON proposal is based on an equal assessment of the costs then the proposed structure would deliver £97k of savings against the UNISON proposal of £83k.

We look forward to a written response to our questions.

**Laney Walsh
Branch Secretary
Redditch & Bromsgrove Branch UNISON**

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