

LGR Briefing held via teams

03.08.2021

Attendees

Branch officers present – Daniel Maguire (DM), Wendy Nichols (WN)
Regional officers present – Dean Harper (DH), Wendy Walton (WW)
50 Members from Hambleton, Richmondshire and Selby District Councils

Introduction

DM introduced the above and outlined the meeting agenda. He thanked attendees for taking time out of their day/lunch hour to attend. He advised that we would be shown a document, pre-submitted questions answered and then a chance for anyone to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

WN advised that after this session, the branch is happy to do any further sessions throughout the process and that communications will be going out jointly from the affected branches in the region.

Confirmation of proposal and brief outline.

WN advised that the decision to go with the NYCC proposal was confirmed at 7pm and at 9pm, DM had sent out comms to all members.

WN outlined the proposal where the 8 districts and borough councils will in effect disappear and will merge into a unitary council – NYCC. As the new authority will be a continuing authority, things like pension, service etc will be transferred over and that they do not envisage redundancies.

Pre-submitted Q's

- Consultation will be the same across all councils.
- Unison will share any information that we can but also ask for members to feed back any information they can.
- The structure will be announced, including newly elected councillors and the CEX.
- It isn't a take-over. NYCC will be the continuing authority and employees will transfer over on their current T's & C's.
- Local press have reported that there were different views from the different UNISON branches in North Yorkshire. This was the case each branch represented the views of its members, however all the branches agreed our three core principles (see below), and are already meeting together to make sure our key principles are realised:
 1. Protect jobs and avoid compulsory redundancies
 2. Level-up terms, conditions and pay
 3. Minimise disruption to staff and services

- If the current authorities feel they have a legitimate need to restructure before the new authority is formed, they can do so following the normal consultation and negotiation process.

Questions asked at the meeting

Will staff be involved?

Yes. The best way to do this is to be in a trade union. Any feedback/suggestions etc can be discussed with the branch.

Is my job safe?

Yes. All jobs will transfer over to the new authority. More senior positions i.e. CEX will be at risk. This is because the new authority will only need 1 CEX but as each authority has one, these roles will be no longer needed in such numbers. We don't celebrate this – the people at risk are people with families to support and their own careers. Some are members of UNISON. We will support them as we would any other member.

Will my pay be affected?

No, this will stay the same when we transfer to the new authority. This will have to be reassessed once the new authority has formed as all members of staff need to be paid equitably. All posts will go through job evaluation. UNISON will be involved with this. As NYCC use the NJC scheme (which is the only scheme approved by UNISON – the districts use different schemes that we have not approved), it will be a fair approach. This will include pay protection for any changes.
Your holiday allowance/pension scheme/length of services etc will not be affected either. This will transfer to the new authority.

Will my location of work change?

No. Your work place will stay the same. The new authority may want to close places of work where there are more than 1 office building. They may decentralise, creating more local hubs with easier access for our residents.

What will happen to the property services team?

Property services and functions like the leisure services will stay the same as NYCC do not provide this service currently. In the longer term, NYCC will look to bring the services together and where things are outsourced we will be arguing to bring them back inhouse. Some areas, for example business support – there is an overlap. NYCC have assured that nothing will change in these areas at the beginning of the new authority. They may go through a restructure but as always, this will need to be consulted on and negotiations made. NYCC have no expectation of compulsory redundancies apart from at the very senior level and think that roles will become available through natural wastage.

What will happen to T's & C's?

Some of NYCC's terms and conditions are better than the district councils. For example, Scarborough has a fantastic redundancy policy that is better than NYCC's but NYCC's holidays are better. UNISON are looking for these to be levelled up and take the best from each current authority in to the new. UNISON needs to know what is important to members so it's important that this is fed back. At the point at which the new council wants to make changes to T&Cs brought over from the current employers, UNISON will consult members.

Will there be opportunity for voluntary redundancies?

This is difficult to answer. Within the next 2 years, unlikely. There will be consultations if redundancies need to happen but any authority will look to take voluntary redundancy first. In regards to job roles, we hope staff don't look for alternative work and resign leaving a shortfall in staffing for the current workload at the existing authorities. This will add pressure on to the staff continuing in to the new authority.

Why isn't it a takeover?

The current councils are being abolished. NYCC will be a 'continuing authority' but will still have a new leadership and new political leadership. As a continuing authority only the district council staff will TUPE into the new employer, but on their current T&Cs. When the new authority is set up, there will be elections for new councillors, who will appoint the new chief exec, which could be one of the current CEX or a new one altogether.

Summary.

The branch will continue to send out bulletins, joint communications etc. Moving forward we will make sure jobs are secure and T&Cs are protected. Our voice is stronger together. The more members we have the better – please discuss the union with colleagues and don't forget about the refer a friend incentive. Information, as it becomes available will be published on the website. We can hold more meetings if members feel this would be beneficial.