

## APPENDIX 2 - Comments (note - these comments were received from a total of 83 staff)

I still see a lot of money being wasted in inefficiencies, on underpinning Amey when they should be providing services to Council without our assistance and plans that appear to be ill thought out and unachievable especially as we don't have the resources to deliver them. These are the areas that should be looked at for savings and not penalising Trafford employees instead. Also couldn't car parking charges be reduced or abolished altogether by more or all staff parking within the grounds of Trafford Town Hall following the cuts to staffing levels?

I currently carry 5 days over every year so do not need any additional days - I appreciate the savings required but if a proportion of staff choose to buy up to 7 days this will offset anyone who does not want/need additional holidays.

This proposal is short sighted, draconian and misguided in that it penalises hard working staff and affects those that can least afford to lose pay the most. In many cases it is the same staff that have shown immense loyalty by staying with Trafford Council through years of adversity. It's part of a current package that has resulted in ever decreasing wages in real terms through either no or minimum annual pay rises, having to pay for parking as well as removal of car allowances, car leasing scheme and pension reduction etc. etc. Due to this, damaged moral and lost productivity, not to mention income, it cannot be stated that this proposal saves £0.5m as all these factors should be taken into account. This doesn't appear to be the case otherwise these measures wouldn't have been brought in and it would now be acknowledge this was a mistake for the reasons I've stating. In the majority cases the workload and stress levels are ever increasing for staff that work for an organisation that will not adjust its expectations to reflect the reduction in staffing numbers and overall working days. This has been exacerbated in recent years by additional unpaid leave. Add to this other desperate, ill-thought out and unachievable ideas to try to save money is it any wonder that my colleagues have and are leaving in their droves increasing the reliance on those that (foolishly) remain. I suspect that this consultation, like many others in recent years, is just a process that has to be completed and the decision to impose 3 days mandatory unpaid leave for the next 2 years, and beyond, has already been decided in essence. I would like answers to all my points above, and those made by others, in an open response to all staff. However I don't expect this to be the case as in a previously 'consultation' this didn't happen just because my points weren't phrased as questions!

This current package is damaging when it comes to retaining and attracting staff of the quality to achieve savings in other areas that would save even more money.

I think it should be voluntary.

I think it's unfair to extend the term and I'm not in agreement. I don't want to lose pay.

I strongly disagree with the proposal to continue to force the 3 days mandatory leave upon members of staff. In a climate where there has been a public sector pay freeze for years, the 3 days mandatory leave means staff members are receiving an actual pay cut, without even starting on what has happened to wages in real terms. With an already overstretched workforce, the mandatory leave exacerbates situation due to the loss of working hours, but the workload stays constant. These lost hours have to be picked up somewhere, which normally results in people actually being unable to take this mandatory leave. There are some instances where staff are unable to take all of their regular annual leave, let alone the additional mandatory. These people are not reimbursed for the time they have been unable to take off meaning they lose out financially as well as having their health and wellbeing negatively affected. The argument that implementing the mandatory leave scheme would save jobs does not stand up to scrutiny when you think of budgetary savings projected up to 2020. The jobs that can be cut will be cut in the end regardless of whether the mandatory leave is applied or not. If we accept the continuation of the mandatory days, what we'll see is that our Terms and Conditions have been eroded and the jobs we were trying to save will have been cut anyway. For these reasons, I cannot support this proposal.

There isn't really an option to say no, as you will terminate and reinstate contracts to have this in place.

I agree with this

The first so-called temporary period has been repeated so it seems to be a permanent fixture.

I do not agree with this proposal which is just another pay cut.

I am also disgusted that you are repeating the same threatening process you used two years ago – “we will be issuing staff with notice to terminate their existing contract of employment and offer immediate re-engagement on a new contract.” This is hardly conducive to a positive employer/employee relationship!

This has a major effect on our face to face service - we just don't have the staffing levels to accommodate this. It basically effects our customers & staff morale. I work to get paid not to have this taken off me for days I have been forced to take.

I already feel that the leave allowance is too high & we all struggle to get our leave in.

I'm happy for this to be extended

The proposal must affect some staff considerably. It adds to the impact of several years of below inflation pay rises.

With rates of pay frozen at 1% PA and mileage rates altered, staffing losses, it is time to be positive with the workforce. There is a cost to ensuring continuity of pensions where Mandatory leave is imposed. It is time to show that the LA values it's workforce by removing this imposition.

As we are reducing staffing levels and requiring staff to do more, it makes no business sense to increase the amount of time we are off work. I suggest we reduce the leave by 3 days (we were only given the additional 3 days a few years ago), increasing the number of hours worked, and therefore enabling the council to deliver more and maintain services. The reduction would still leave us with 27 days, favourable to the private sector. It would also encourage more people to buy additional days leave, giving the council the additional resources it requires.

The current three additional days is nothing more than a tax on the hard-working staff, further reducing morale, at a time when you need us more than ever to be fully supportive and working at full strength. Is it any wonder the staff surveys slate the leadership? Along with the car-parking fees, it's clear the staff are seen as a cash-cow, instead of invested in as the heart and soul of the organisation.

We have too much leave already - money is better than leave

Not enough staff left to have people off I need the money more than leave

I do not have the ability to accrue flexi-time so I find the extra 3 days helpful to take over Christmas

Staff benefits continue to be cut and workloads continue to increase.

I personally enjoy having the extra time off and you do not really feel the deductions each month. I would like the option to purchase additional days and spread the cost over the year.

Not an issue as I already have a contract which allows me to take additional unpaid leave during the year.

I agree that people can ask for unpaid leave but not that it is mandatory on all staff regardless of their needs, wishes and work pressures.

This is in effect a pay cut, therefore I do have concerns for low paid workers and colleagues who struggle financially  
I agree with it

It's a paycut, no doubt about it. However, employees are benefitting by having more time off. Really, and I think it's a bit silly that it's not already been stipulated, the three days should be taken over the 'Christmas Closure' - Makes perfect sense. Stops people moaning about "not being able to use the extra days" and ensures staff are not just building flex for Christmas. If staff are being forced to take mandatory leave, it makes sense to force them to take it on the mandatory Christmas closure, which incidentally is 3 days.

This helps with providing childcare for school holidays

I agree

Unfair, other councils within AGMA are not taking this approach

I do not wish to subsidise Trafford's council tax bands. If you need this money, raise CTax levels. Two years ago you lied, indicating the proposal was limited to two year's duration. It wasn't. It is permanent and only subject to review. You are lying again. This is a permanent change, subject to a review in 2017. Why don't you openly say this? It's about time you recognised that those staff remaining at Trafford have been hammered by austerity and it's time to give them back their agreed pay levels. Tesco don't ask their checkout staff to pay 10p towards every customer's bill do they, but you think it's OK for Council Officers to subsidise their customers' bills.

The proposal is discriminatory. Some of the council's best paid employees are not affected. Why? A Headteacher earning £60 / £80k pa does get touched, but a school crossing patrol officer does. Please explain how that's fair.

How can the work consultation be used when if you do not sign to agree change in your contract it is forced on you anyway. Totally wrong 2 years just about acceptable 4 years unfair.

I understand that the Council needs to save money and I welcome the opportunity to buy additional leave over a 12 month period

I do not consider that the savings the Council are proposing to make should come from my pocket. With frozen salaries, a loss of essential car user allowance and 3 days unpaid leave for the past 2 year, my income has decreased significantly.

In a department where officers struggle to take all of their annual leave anyway, this is increasingly putting pressure upon staff to do more work (workload has increased, staff numbers have been down) in less time (or their own time). This is reflected in the number of flexi hours staff have built up which they will never be able to take and the uncharacteristically high levels of sickness. The Council are failing to take into consideration the health and wellbeing of their staff with serious implications.

Great, I am single and would prefer the time off than the money.

Three days is OK, but any more would make it difficult for libraries to manage with the current staffing level

This should not be compulsory, but available to people who require or need it.

I expressed my concerns when the scheme was initially introduced, if anything, the reasons underlying my concern have increased in the interim.

As always, the proposals are silent on what will happen to the 'displaced' workload arising from the fact that all staff will be allocated between 3 and 10 days' leave.

There had already been significant reductions in headcount across services when the scheme was first introduced, and this has continued in the interim. There has however been no commensurate decrease in the expected volumes/standard/promptness of workload delivery. The work previously done by those already deemed 'redundant' has been redistributed within or amongst teams, frequently exacerbating already-existing pressures. It is neither sensible nor reasonable to assume that these ongoing and increasing workload burdens can simply be 'absorbed' with no adverse consequences.

This is basically another pay cut and I find it insulting . It does not inspire staff to undertake all the extra work we have to do as a result of having had severe staffing reductions.

I agree if it keeps more people in work.

But feel there should be no exceptions as feel it is unfair and everybody should be treated the same regardless of role or rank because it is a pay cut.

This should be voluntary and not forced upon the workforce. I am sure that some staff would be willing to agree to taking additional days without this needing to be imposed to all staff.

I do not agree with this proposal. The reason for this is because a number of employees including myself already have a number of hours TOIL to take in addition to annual leave, and due to the demands of the job in hand taking leave and claiming back TOIL is already difficult due to being so busy in work. Therefore TOIL is often lost. When staff are therefore already working over their contractual hours without pay, taking a further 3 days unpaid leave feels like a further opportunity to be paid less for doing more.

Oppressive.

Staff have in effect been subject to a pay cut for the past 2 years during a time when the cost of living continues to increase. Many staff have had to take on board additional responsibilities and workload as a result of budget cuts during the past 2 years for which they have not received any additional payment. It is highly likely that as a result of the budget proposals there will be less staff and that those remaining will be expected to provide the same level of service with less people (do more, better with less - it's not sustainable). By abolishing the 3 days mandatory leave this would provide staff with recognition for their hard work during difficult times and whilst it would not be a pay increase (merely paying us what we should be paid) it would feel like a pay increase and could do much to improve staff morale which is at an all time low.

Yes

Fine with them

I feel this is totally unacceptable. I am aware of the savings that needs to be made but we just can not sustain what in essence is pay cut after pay cut for years.

This has been managed well this year and most staff view this positively as it gives more leave flexibility to spend time with your family. I do however, have sympathy for the people who suffer from the impact of a reduced salary.

Its a hidden pay cut.

Its unfair.

It doesn't offer choice. It doesn't take into account those who work part time. Its an insult after Sean Anstee received a 10% pay rise last year.

A sensible proposal in the current time of Austerity cuts

Happy to have 3 days unpaid leave, as the cost of it is spread over the year its not really noticeable but the extra holidays is very useful for my circumstances

From a personal perspective I do not have an issue with this & am comfortable with it being extended, however I am concerned about its impact on our ability to recruit the right candidate. I have direct experience where this issue and the inability to vary these terms, were cited as a reason not to accept an employment offer.

We as a team have to work over the Christmas and New Year period to provide statutory services. We are now such a small team that it is difficult to fit in our annual leave to maintain services, let alone an extra 2 days. We feel we may have a case for being exempt from this mandatory leave.

Good idea, like that effects most staff not just specific teams.

I have no issues and it works well

Does not feel like a consultation - feels quite threatening - i.e. if you do not sign up for this 'voluntarily' then your contract will be terminated.



The mandatory leave scheme should not remain in its current form. It is recognised that the council has savings to make but the council should also recognise the hardship this caused to some employees and seek to mitigate those hardships.

In a period when work families tax credits will also hit many of the council's employees, the council should seek to assist these lower paid employees. Any employee on work family tax credits should be able to seek an exemption purely based on those criteria. These exemptions can easily be offset by the additional leave scheme that should be guaranteed for the same temporary period.

If further savings are required to give lower paid staff relief then these should be sort very simply from the highest paid employees within the council, who will be less financially hit by the current 3 days. If necessary consideration should therefore be given extending the mandatory leave scheme from 3 to 4 or 5 days for those employees who are paid in the higher rate income tax bracket. (3 days net pay after 40% tax is not as much of a hardship as 3 days at 20% when you're on tax credit level pay.)

I continue to oppose the imposition of this pay reduction. It's a 'consultation' in name only when accompanied by a threat of termination!

A.k.a the "proposal to extend your pay cut for another year" Just what we need!

We were forced to agree to this last time on the basis that it was a temporary measure; we have not received a decent pay rise, the staff salary bands were restructured and reduced, and now we are being asked to give up more salary! Maybe I should ask the Council to give up charging me Council Tax... We are already working in many cases over and above our contracted hours, with no overtime or reward. Pay the staff in full for what they do, this will only save £500k.

Bad for morale and undervalues staff and it is difficult enough to take the leave we are entitled to without having no choice over unpaid leave.

I agree with it to a certain degree - I think it should be voluntary though. I am happy to volunteer for the unpaid leave but others may not. I think, really, the consultation, while it has to happen, is largely irrelevant as it will be passed anyway or contract's will be terminated which, I feel, means staff have no real say.

By continuing to enforce salary cuts in this way the Council is at risk of not attracting and retaining the highest quality of staff as people will be attracted to better paid jobs elsewhere.

I believe that staff have contributed to the Council's cost savings enough to date and should not continue to be penalised! We have already had salary cuts from the loss of the essential car user scheme and reduction in paid sick leave. At a time when salaries in the private sector are increasing, along with the amount of jobs available, continuing to cut Council employees salary is contrary to this and not in line with the job market.

Whilst the unpaid leave does mean that staff get 3 days extra leave, for many roles/jobs within the Council it does not mean that we have less work to do. Within my role I am not given less work because of it - it just means that I have less time in which to get the job done at a time when work levels continue to be very high, along with stress levels! It is time that the Council started to appreciate all of the hard work that their staff do and treat and pay them fairly!

Unfair when the leader of the council has received a 10% pay rise.

As I am part time and term time the deduction for mandatory leave makes a difference to my income that I would prefer to have the salary!

Other options should be implemented such as VER.

I did not agree with the proposal 2 years ago and do not for a second period. I feel this is a politically / ideologically driven policy to attack the local services and the staff whom deliver them.

Ok as long as it is temporary and reviewed after the 2 year period. Will this have any further pension implications - would we have to arrange another manual top up?

Ideally I would prefer that the 3 days mandatory unpaid leave is not extended as everyone is losing out on salary; however, if it genuinely means that the money saved will retain jobs then I agree with the proposal.

Fine for me.

I personally cannot afford it, and furthermore I do not believe these cuts are necessary

Accept the business/ financial requirement in the current climate.

Negative impact on workload / resourcing which is already stretched

Ideologically and economically I disagree fundamentally with austerity measures; it has no economic logic and is part of a wider attack on the poor. A deficit can and should be used to invest in economic growth not excuse the mis-management by unregulated banking sector. Furthermore, personally this is effectively a 2% pay cut which on top of continued reduced terms and conditions I cannot afford.

The extra days were useful to me as a parent of a young child and the deduction in wages being spread across the year made it less impactful.

I have strong concerns about the extension of the mandatory leave scheme considering the difficulties that a number of members of staff within libraries have had getting the annual leave that they would like after the implementation of the new leave scheme across library staff. I believe that the leave scheme has created an unpleasant environment where colleagues actively compete for leave, and those of us that are unable to book their leave over 9 – 18 months in advance are repeatedly disappointed, and the continuation of the mandatory leave scheme will further implement on this and impede on morale.

Too much leave leads to a reduction in productivity at this time when the public and services need us the most. How can we cut services and also reduce the amount of time the remaining staff are actually in?...

Need the salary more than the leave.

Happy to continue this but wouldn't want any increase in the additional mandatory unpaid leave e.g. increase from 3 to 5 days

Should be 5

Fine

We need to save money. This is one way. Employees with a job need to consider those who maybe compulsory made redundant.