

Fit for Future – Employment Process

INTRODUCTION

Warwick District Council has outlined in Fit for the Future (FFF), its approach in response to meet the challenges in terms of balancing the budget, the changing environment, government policy and customer expectations. It will need a workforce that is flexible to respond to these changes in a timely and productive manner.

This Employment Process and associated procedures seek to maximise the opportunities for alternative careers for employees facing potential job loss through redundancy. The highest priority will be given to maintaining the security of staff as it is Council policy to avoid redundancy wherever possible.

This has been established in consultation between the Council, and its unions and sets out the measures that will be taken with the objective of maintaining employment security on the understanding that all parties will agree to use their best endeavours to comply with its provisions. The main objectives are:

- (i) Retaining skills, expertise and knowledge;
- (ii) Preventing avoidable job losses;
- (iii) Creating organisational flexibility; and
- (iv) Avoiding the need for redundancy and early retirement

It applies to all employees of the Council, with the exception of the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer and Heads of Service.

Where a service transfers to another employer, the Council will wish to consider the transfer of those staff who are engaged in providing that service to the new employer under TUPE.

Measures to preserve continuity of employment

To preserve continuity of employment we will look to Job Match into any vacant post in order to preserve security of employment and avoid redundancies.

The following outlines the processes which will be followed and gives guidance on how we intend to preserve continuity of employment.

Consultation Stages

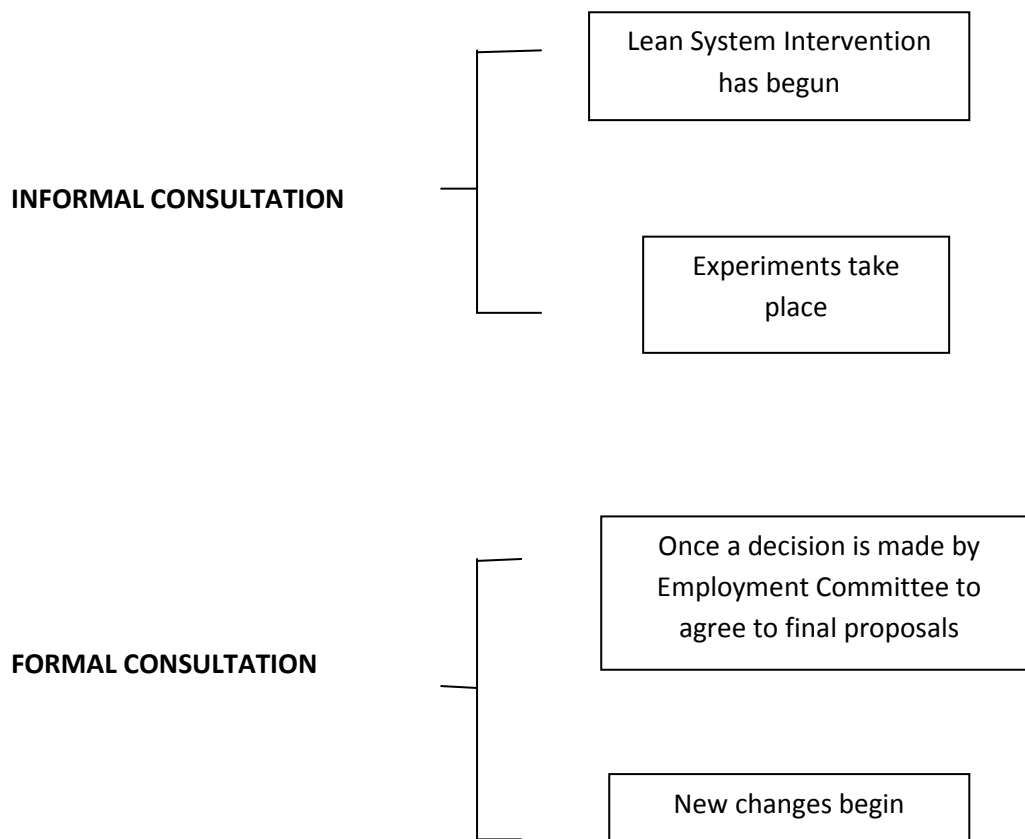
During the FFF programme, the current Consultation and Communication Policy, which has been agreed with the unions, will be followed. Listed below are the stages that will be followed and a quick guide for ease of use.

Informal Consultation will begin when any changes to the service are being considered – this can include initial thoughts, experiment and all the points up until final decisions are reached. Any discussions at this stage may be subject to change as further information is gathered, more data is available and other factors about the proposed changes arise as part of the consultation. This is when those that are affected have the opportunity to comment on proposals. Within systems thinking interventions, when you are at the point of experimenting and during experimentation you are still in the informal consultation period.

Once an experiment is deemed to be working and is likely to become 'normal', proposals need to be drafted and put to either Executive (for service changes) or Employment Committee (for establishment changes) or both - for approval. At this point, if there is potential for someone to be displaced by the new working practice a meeting will be arranged with your line manager and HR to look at all the options available and to run through the skills inventory.

Once this proposal has been approved at committee, the decision has been made that will affect people and posts and therefore will move into **formal consultation**. This means that any posts that are to be displaced need to be formally placed 'At risk' and people will be given formal notice. Those that are affected will be invited to a 1-1 meeting where they will discuss the impact of the proposals and their own specific circumstances, they will be given notice and formal consultation will begin.

Consultation Quick Guide



Experimenting

Once an intervention reaches the stage where experiments are being scoped, consideration needs to be given as to how the experiments will be resourced.

All staff involved in the interventions, must be given the maximum opportunity to understand any changes to the process, the work and to their job roles to ensure that wherever possible, roles are not displaced unnecessarily. It is assumed that all our staff already have the ability and experience to retain their employment status with WDC and adapt to the changing service requirements.

Experiments are normally run simultaneously alongside 'business as usual' until it is deemed to be successfully working to become normal. Therefore, some staff will be working in one system and some in another. To ensure that all staff have equal opportunity to understand the potential future changes during the experiments, staff will be asked to volunteer for experimenting but if that is not successful staff will be advised how they will be involved. Each systems thinking intervention will ensure that all staff are offered an opportunity to understand the changes as fully as possible. This could be a phased or rotated involvement for all staff, or those that are unable to make a full commitment due to current work demands, can shadow and get feedback or 'dip in' when it is opportunistic to do so. The exact details will depend on the nature of the experiment and so will vary from intervention to intervention. Staff will be encouraged at all points to understand the experiment and embrace the opportunities.

Even though changes may be made to some job roles through the experimenting stage, this is not a permanent change to their role and they are not formally 'at risk' of being made redundant. The whole purpose of experimenting is to check the thought processes and to measure if they achieve the outcome scoped at the start of the experimenting stage.

Job Matching – How it works

This document works in conjunction with our current Redeployment Policy and has been agreed in conjunction with our union colleagues.

If an employee is displaced from their role and put 'at risk' they will enter into a virtual redeployment pool for a minimum of 12 weeks. A HR Officer together with the Service Manager will hold an initial meeting to outline the individual support that each employee will need in the short and medium term. To assist in matching staff to roles, each individual will be supported by HR in completing a Skills Matching Inventory which will guide them into thinking about current skills and any additional skills they have to offer.

Before any role is put into the vacancy pool it will have been reviewed and revised or new Job Description and Person Specification will have been drafted. The Person Specification will have been weighted to indicate what level of skills the person will need to have in order to fill that role, see Appendix I.

Staff should be aware that they could be asked to move service areas to work on a project or piece of work during their time in the redeployment pool as commensurate with their skills and experience.

HR will start the process of job matching staff into new roles once they have formally been put 'at risk' and notice given of the possibility of redundancy if they are not matched successfully. Matching against roles will take into account the current grade, skills and experience and any additional skills and experience that is relevant from the Job Description and Person Specification.

If there is more than one person matched to the same vacancy, each will be assessed and scored against the weighted criteria and the person who best matches the criteria will be offered the role. In these situations, individuals will receive detailed feedback on their own scoring and matching (but not anyone else') anyone not matched will return to the virtual redeployment pool.

Once matched into the role, there will be up to 12 weeks to trial it – this includes the statutory 4 week trial period. If for any reason this does not work out, employees will have the right to return to the redeployment pool and continue to be matched for another post. If this is within the 12 weeks, HR will continue to work with individuals to redeploy and match successfully.

Once an employee is matched into a role and completes the 12 weeks trial satisfactorily, this will be confirmed in writing by HR and employment continues.

If an employee is matched into a role but the employee refuses to accept it then, this will be deemed as a resignation and employment will be terminated at the end of the notice period without redundancy payments.

Objections to Job Matching

Should an employee object to being matched into a role then they must put in writing to the HR Manager the reasons why they are objecting within 5 working days of being told of the match.

In the event of an employee not being successfully matched or redeployed to a role during their 12 weeks in the redeployment pool, they will be made redundant in line with the Council's scheme and will be paid accordingly.

Appeal

All employees who are made redundant have the right to appeal against this decision and each will be heard on their own merits.

February 2011

Matching Process Flowchart

