



Date 16/02/2015

Copies To:

Leader: Cllr J. Birch

Director of Corporate Resources: Neil Dart

### **Unions Response to Draft Budget & Corporate Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18**

As with past responses, we begin by stating that Unison nationally and locally is disappointed by the continued financial cuts in the public sector. This has and will continue to have a very damaging effect on staff and services to the community.

The budget setting process is a difficult time for all concerned. Every member of Hastings Borough Council is aware that there are difficult decisions to be made at all levels. We are hopeful that every effort will be made to minimise staff losses and that voluntary redundancy will be used to the fullest extent, thereby saving as many jobs as possible.

Again, Unison is very disappointed that there has been no strong evidence of planning for the maintenance of service levels. When workload has been addressed responses have been very vague. Clear information on what work is diminishing commensurate with staff reduction is not evident.

It is also clear that work from deleted posts is to be absorbed by remaining staff. We do not feel that Members in particular, understand the pressure that continues to mount on remaining staff. The phrase that is often used is 'Hastings punches well above its weight'. We feel the time has come to address just how realistic this is and how these expectations are affecting staff.

We are concerned that cuts to the training budget will not allow for succession planning when we lose experienced staff. As we discussed with the Critical Friend, we do not feel that a long term plan is in place and we move from one budget to the next with no overall long-term view for the organisation.

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Concern has been expressed for colleagues expected to continue the work. This naturally has an impact on the health and wellbeing of staff. Unison understands the changes to the Occupational Health service should not disadvantage staff that need to use the service.

Yours Sincerely

*Irene O'Mara*

*Chair Unison Hastings LG*