

APPENDIX 2

# Housing Advice Service

## - Staff Consultation Feedback Report

March 2016

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### Document Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
0.1	24/2/16	Simon Field	1 <sup>st</sup> draft
0.2	1/3/16	Simon Field	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft
0.3	1/3/16	Simon Field	Circulated for comments
0.4	2/3/16	Jim Crawshaw	Comments
0.5	2/3/16	Simon Field	Further amendments
0.6	4/3/16	Simon Field	Further amendments, additional staff comments capture and re-formatted
1.0			Baselined version

## **1. Summary:**

- 1.1. The Homeless and Pre-Tenancy Service have developed a proposal to move to a Single Housing Advice Centre at Newtown.
- 1.2. This would involve relocation of staff from the current Housing Advice Centres in Northfield, Sparkbrook and Erdington and also ending having a back office presence at Lifford House and Civic House. (Arrangements for the Youth Hub will remain unchanged)
- 1.3. Staff will either be working in Newtown HAC or utilising the back office space provided at Lancaster Circus.
- 1.4. This document details the staff consultation process and provides some of the feedback given.

## **2. Staff affected**

- 2.1. The following numbers and grades of staff work within the Housing Advice Service.

Grade	Number of individuals
2	10
3	29
4	28
5	4
6	1

- 2.2. Most of these staff will be required to work from both Newtown HAC where the service will be delivered from and Lancaster Circus. A few staff will move into a new Assessing Needs team which will be picking up the management of the Housing Register applications (Part 6) and will be based purely at Lancaster Circus.

## **3. Consultation overview**

- 3.1. Formal consultation with Housing Advice Centre staff ran from 4 January 2016 through to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.
- 3.2. In addition to this all of the Homeless and Pre-Tenancy Service staff are subject to a consultation on proposed budget savings which runs from 27 January to 13 March 2016.
- 3.3. The consultation process involved regular meetings with Unions, Staff briefings, individual 1:2:1s with Managers and feedback through a dedicated email account. Regular reminders were sent out to staff to allow them to feedback their views.

- 3.4. A staff working group was set up with meetings run by a Grade 5 Service Manager. This contains representatives from across the HACs coming together to discuss aspects of the proposed new service and to shape future delivery. See appendix 2A for terms of reference. This group will continue to meet as we move towards the implementation of the proposal (subject to Cabinet decision).
- 3.5. The following table provides an overview of the service discussions with staff and trade unions.

Dates	Details of event	Comments
07-10-15	Briefing with trade unions	Overview of plans and start of ongoing discussion with staff and trade unions about proposals
14-10-15 and 15-10-15	Initial staff briefing on plans	This provided an initial briefing to staff on plans and allowed for feedback to be started. A series of FAQs were circulated based upon this. (See appendix 2B). NB this included staff alongside Housing Advice who were subsequently taken out of the scope of the consultation as they would not be affected
<b>4-1-16</b>	<b>Formal consultation begins</b>	
4-1-16	Briefing with trade unions	Overview of the plans
7-1-16, 8-1-16 and 20-1-16	Formal Staff briefing	Full presentation of formal plans and staff feedback. Two alternative events with additional mop up session
<b>20-1-16</b>	<b>Staff working group 1</b>	First meeting of staff working group.
27-1-16	Review meeting with trade unions	Review and ongoing discussion
27-1-16 and 28-1-16	Staff briefing	Consultation Meeting for Housing and Pre-Tenancy – this focused on new budget proposals rather than just the HAC proposals and was targeted at the whole eservice. This included a mop up session for those who missed the first two
<b>4-2-16</b>	<b>Staff working group 2</b>	
10-2-16	Review meeting with trade unions	Review and ongoing discussion
<b>15-2-16</b>	<b>Email: Final reminder</b>	Request for staff to raise their final comments
18-2-16	Planned end of formal 45 day initial consultation period- further time given to supply information back to Trade Unions	
<b>19-2-16</b>	<b>Staff working group 3</b>	
02-03-16	Meeting with Trade Union colleagues	Discussion of consultation and sharing of proposals
4-3-16	Closure of formal consultation period and email to staff and unions	

## **4. Staff feedback**

### **4.1. Individual feedback**

- 4.1.1. Overall there have been few individual responses by staff through the dedicated email address and more often views have been expressed through wider union and team responses or captured in meetings.
- 4.1.2. Service Managers have reported that the proposals are not fully supported by staff; however this does differ across different offices.
- 4.1.3. The six received responses are summarised in appendix 2C. These are in addition to questions raised at events; the first set of these were summarised in the Questions and Answers shown in Appendix 2B.
- 4.1.4. There are concerns around the capacity of a single HAC to deal with volume and requests to re-consider this. Additionally there are safety concerns around the single HAC - (both through overcrowding and staff's own personal safety in the area).
- 4.1.5. Another response focused on a number of improvements to the service they felt could be made and these will be evaluated.
- 4.1.6. Concerns about increased travel time and lack of staff car parking were also raised. A further direct submission to the Head of Service raised concerns around Gang Activity (this is addressed via the Equality Assessment),
- 4.1.7. Several staff also responded through the Be Heard public consultation. Their views will be noted in that document rather than re-produced here (see Public Consultation report Appendix 1 section 5.2.52 and onwards.)
- 4.1.8. Individual meetings were offered to all staff affected between them and their manager. These picked up similar concerns around safety, parking and increased travelling time. Some concerns were also raised about how extra travelling time might make caring for children or others more difficult. A concern was raised about how the service will respond to those needing accommodation that day still in the centre after closing time and staff having to stay later to deal with this.
- 4.1.9. Collectively the Erdington HAC team also put in a response which was responded to by the Head of Service.

#### **4.2. Union feedback**

- 4.2.1. Three formal meetings have been held with Trade Unions during the consultation period. These have mainly focused upon providing unions with further information to enable them to inform their members.
- 4.2.2. In addition there have been formal email requests for information with regard to health and safety concerns. See appendix 2D
- 4.2.3. Trade Unions have raised concerns about the potential volume of citizens using the centre and whether there is sufficient capacity at Newtown. They dispute that a single HAC will deliver the drivers for change.
- 4.2.4. They have requested two HACs be considered to which would reduce footfall and also increase availability of parking.
- 4.2.5. One response was submitted on behalf of Erdington Staff by their union rep. They have also requested a second HAC venue be developed suggesting that this should be in Erdington or Sparkbrook. This would also allow for some co-location of staff from Temporary Accommodation in the HAC. Also they raise concerns about the ending of Neighbourhood Advice Staff support and that this will put on undue pressure on the service. There are wider concerns that the new focused on increasing the number of appointments offered may mean that staff have limited time for decision making

#### **4.3. Staff Working Group**

- 4.3.1. The working group was set up to provide the opportunity to discuss proposals around Housing Advice Centres and to also provide the views of those currently working in the service about the impact of changes. The terms of reference for the group are given in Appendix 2A
- 4.3.2. The group has been chaired by a Service Manager with support from Business Change. The group has ten frontline staff attending with representation from across the four current centres.
- 4.3.3. So far it has met three times and will continue to meet to drive improvement in the service.
- 4.3.4. A summary of the key points of each meeting is shown below opposite

Meeting	Date	Key discussions points
1	20-1-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• CCTV/security</li> <li>• Plasma screens</li> <li>• Staffing resources</li> <li>• Customer Journey for using the centre</li> </ul>
2	4-2-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment process</li> <li>• Volume using the centre</li> <li>• Parking around Newtown</li> </ul>
3	18-2-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Volume using the centre</li> <li>• Co-ordination of daily service</li> <li>• Future staff training,</li> </ul>

## 5. Response to points raised

5.1. Safety is a significant concern that has been raised and will continue to be reviewed. Increased security staffing has been agreed to ensure that there are two security staff between 9:00 and 19:00. The current CCTV is also under review to ensure it meets the service demands.

5.2. Capacity at Newtown has been assessed and considered to be sufficient to meet with current levels of demand. Increasingly we will be seeking to minimise the number of repeat visits and reasons why citizens will need to attend a HAC (with some services being available online and through phone interviews.) Although providing Housing Advice for the City there will also be the ending of other services previously provided by NAS which will ease pressure on the building.

5.3. The creation of the floorwalker roles along with a dedicated duty manager will put the onus on providing quicker responses to citizens and taking common sense measures to avoid longer waits occurring. More work will be done with staff to clarify and develop this role so there is a clear understanding of expectations and concerns.

5.4. There is some available parking for the building and the managers will look to allocate these based upon any reasonable adjustments identified for individual staff members and upon daily need (e.g. later working).

5.5. Staff will be involved in the development of staff rotas and given sufficient notice of their duties. Having more staff on site will provide some flexibility when there are delays in finding immediate accommodation. Further work is also to take place to review how this process works to see if it can be improved.

5.6. Concerns have been raised about staff availability for decision making if they are always doing interviewing. The proposed operational model for the centre will

continue to be reviewed with staff input to make sure that there is the correct balance between staff on interviews allowing citizens to be seen and staff having time to the make prompt decisions.

- 5.7. Legal advice has emphasised that moving to a single Housing Advice Centre will protect the service against further future Legal Challenge. We also believe that it will allow an improved quality of service and for greater consistency to be maintained.



## **Appendix 2A – Terms of Reference for Staff working group**

### **Working Group**

This is a Working Group to look at considerations for moving forward the development of the Housing Advice Service and its future delivery.

Representation on the Working Group is required from across the HACs & case management team, including Health and Housing, Pathways and BCC employees in Gate way.

The optimum number of staff is twelve members, and ideally all grades will be represented in the working group, but in the event of an oversubscription, then managers will work with teams to ensure fair selection and representation.

### **Requirements for attendees.**

- Must demonstrate a commitment to contribute to the development of the service for the future with an unbiased, open minded approach.
- Must be available to attend all meetings arranged.
- Must be able to communicate effectively within the meetings, and at any follow up team meetings to ensure discussions /outcomes are shared.
- It is anticipated that meetings will take place on a fortnightly basis; it will be the individual's responsibility to ensure that their manager is aware of the schedule of meetings in order that duty rotas can be drawn up accordingly.

### **Terms of Reference for Working Group**

- The discussions from the group will feed into the overall decision making progress within the service and provide guidance and recommendations for further consideration and implementation when practical.
- Whilst supporting the development of the service this is in addition to more formal consultation routes.
- It will be chaired by Collette Campbell (Service Manager)
- Agreed actions will be cascaded down to teams
- It will meet fortnightly for up to 90 minutes.
- Where someone repeatedly doesn't attend the chair will review whether to ask for another representative.
- This group will be set up for 6 months with a review at 3 months to decide if it is meeting its purpose.

### **Standard Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Review of actions
3. Chair – update on service developments
4. Review of HAC transition plan
5. Feedback from local teams
6. Risks, Issues, Dependencies
7. Future agenda items
8. Next meeting

## Appendix 2B Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Staff Briefing Q&A 14/10/2015 & 15/10/2015

Questions asked and Initial Answers given (NB some answers have developed or altered since then)

	There are also briefings for all staff in NAIS today and tomorrow. Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Advice staff are to be based at New Aston House – 70 and we are looking at additional desks to be sourced. There will be a working group headed by Maura and Collette and will require volunteers.
Q	Will there be 2 HACs?
A	432 + 1 – no proper signage in New Aston House. Homeless & Pre-Tenancy could not deliver across 2 offices. Health & Safety, public expectation – statutory duty. Councillor desire to have 2 locations. We did say we would need 14 Neighbourhood Advisors if the service worked out of 2 locations but not possible. We have considered all options.
Q	NAIS staff – what grade will they be and what budget will they come under?
A	Further discussions are required around this.
Q	Assessing Needs team – Will there be the option to do Part 6 or Part 7 by way of Expressions of Interest, any details? Going backwards? Everything on line – workflow? Will there be a specialised team?
A	The intention is that everyone will be within the same office.
Q	How many people will be going into New Aston House?
A	60 People - Not just talking about ground floor facilities, discussions around first floor availability on-going.
Q	Is the intention to have people on the front line all the time?
A	No, there will be a separate team for Part 7, computers for customers, floor walkers who will help in assisting customers with appointments. There will be a registration team, short-term, staffed by floor walkers.
Q	How many computers will there be for customers?
A	
Q	Have Cabinet agreed the new plans and have dates been set?
A	Cabinet agreed as at 01/04/2015 – the new financial year. There will be a 45 day consultation period and we will give 3-months notice for the move.
Q	Will we still have our back office?
A	There will still be Homeless & Pre-Tenancy services people at Lancaster Circus. We did look to move everyone to New Aston House.
Q	Has Health & Safety and parking been considered?

A	There is an action plan to consider all of these factors currently in process.
Q	What will the office hours be?
A	We would not have a half day closure, we are reluctant to shorten days of availability and currently have no thought to shorten.
Q	Will there be a cut-off time? Or else there is likely to be busy queues outside the building.
A	It is planned to have 20 odd staff ready to see customers, pinch point – staffed up to deal, but need to talk through the detail. We will not turn people away if they have come across the city.
Q	With applications at the centre – who will access? Other?
A	Normal housing applications to be made on-line, for vulnerable people, there will be a facility at New Aston House to complete the Part 6 in office.
Q	Will there be a cut-off time?
A	TA will have a cut-off time, but we do not . . ??? . . cannot get TA to assist? JC to speak to L.C.
Q	What appointments will we offer? On the day or pre-booked?
A	Yes we will offer appointments to discuss housing options – booked appointments. We would rather have appointments to manage the flow. There may be an extension of appointment times, but this can be part of the working group discussion. The difference in appointment will be dependent on the circumstances.
Q	What will happen with DV cases? Has there been an Equality Assessment?
A	With regards to DV and gang related cases these can be progressed by the visiting officers, numbers have not yet been agreed. They will deal with rate circumstances, risks and planned appointments away from the office.
Q	Who will work where? Front reception GR4 or GR3s? Part 6 – GR3s?
A	Assessment will be carried out by GR3s and sign off point with be by the GR4s (on the top band).
	Prevention toolkit
Q	Will there be security?
A	We are looking at 1 or 2 security guards and holding posts for this. Need to look at this and consider CCTV / Police – local community officer.
Q	Are we making any savings?
A	This is not about saving anything. There are 200K savings to be made next year, this proposal is nothing to do with this.

Q	Was Sparkbrook not considered for the one HAC location?
A	All locations were discussed, including Sparkbrook but New Aston House was seen as more accessible than any of the other 3 offices. New Aston House has been set up to be cleared. Security at Sparkbrook is paid for by the NHS. The rent at Sparkbrook is also higher.
Q	Will there be a Review Officer on duty at the HAC, as staff forever calling if they get stuck?
A	There are issues regarding the role of the Review Officer as they are involved in the decision making. We will skill up staff to deliver the service requirement. This has thrown up the issue of who and what do we need to deliver as part of a legal service? We need the right people to deliver the service.
Q	Will there be a choice or expression of interest process for the posts?
A	If there is a high level of people wanting to work on the Part 6 process, yes there may be interviews, we will look at filling the posts in the fairest way.
Q	What if there are no desks available? Will you look at another location?
A	Children's Services are currently on the first floor at New Aston House and we are trying to secure desks in the building. We need to be clear at the 45-day timescale on what is available. It will all be clear before the formal consultation.
Q	Will there be time to breathe to make decisions, as there is now?
A	Yes, that's your job.
Q	Will there be job evaluations for the roles?
A	We have not thought about that, as there is no change in the job descriptions so it is not required. The generic job descriptions remain.
	15/10/2015
Q	How many staff will be in the Part 6 team?
A	Looking at 10 but this needs to be worked through. We will also have floor walkers and the team will consist of a mixture of GR3 and GR4 officers. The GR4 officers will sign-off for top banding awards.
Q	How will you decide who gets which positions? Will there be expressions of interest or an interview process?
A	Talk through process - homeless – reception – floor walkers – GR4 – initial options screening. Completion of form by GR3/GR4. Pre-booked appointments GR3.
Q	You will have a maximum 6 Advisors – 3 Senior Housing Needs Officers – 9 people x 4 = 40 across the city. Cannot see 40 at Newtown?
A	25 Per day across the city, AV 125 not on duty every day.

	<p>Do not know volume of people from NAIS see – prevention – officers greatly. Can have up to 26/28 – over 20 officers ready to interview. NAIS staff will be doing benefit work. Reception will assess issues and sign-post.</p> <p>It does take 6 Advisors – 24 officers to try to address. It is decision making time.</p>
Q	Concerns about unhappy people in one place?
A	Health and Safety are looking at the action plan, CCTV, security – what do we need, crowd control including risk assessments. Every other major city has one homeless centre and they are smaller. Want to avoid the need for travelling across the city where / when possible.
Q	What will the opening hours be?
A	Same as now, no half-day closing.
Q	It busy like never known it?
A	Idea – enough staff to manage, rota management.
Q	Concerns over the backlog
A	12 on duty today - taking applications, as well as prevention.
Q	Believe New Aston House is too small, there is not enough staff – think you are setting up to fail.
A	
Q	How many staff will be on reception?
A	250 Footfall . . .
Q	Car parking – how much is there and how will it be allocated?
A	
Q	Who will cover reception – GR3s or GR4s?
A	
Q	Will those on reception need to record every person?
A	
Q	What will happen with DV victims – has safety been considered? Do we need more Visiting Officers?
A	We have looked at how to mitigate all of these issues.
Q	What about BSWAID – will they be coming back to support?
A	BSWAID will not be coming back in to support. There will be liaison with west midlands

	police.
Q	TA Provision – What if the team are not available to provide accommodation?
A	Work at HAC – HB
Q	<p>Busy – maximum people at reception, what is this figure? Ensure we meet obligations. Need to check on regulation. Risk assessment and contingency plan required.</p> <p>Families / children  Unhappy customers  ‘Cleaning office from hell’  Levels of aggression  Incidents happen – clientele - ensure staff are safe.  Unpredictable job – too many people at same time – too much hassle.  GR5 Duty manager  Travel for customers – bus tickets  (from Neighbourhood Offices) – May provide taxis</p> <p>Building capacity – Erdington is 30/40 and has upstairs reception  Budget – HRA  Case management team</p> <p>Under the new scheme -  Cases need to be managed  Will still sit in LC  Assessing team – dealing with all applications  No specific Health &amp; Housing team – amalgamated  MAPPA / Children in need  Band 1 – 3 months</p> <p>Size not worked out</p> <p>Clear CM function – 2 separate teams?</p>
Q	Telephone team at Lancaster? They need more capacity on the phones – how will you address this?
A	There is capacity within New Aston House.

## **Appendix 2C– Individual Email Responses**

### **Response S1 - staff member**

Summary: Member of staff concerns about;

- The Consultation process
- There only being one HAC
- Capacity of single HAC and impact upon safety from overcrowding
- Their safety in working from Newtown.
- Concerns about increased personal travel (but noted this was an issue for others and accepted it)

### **Response S2 – staff member**

Summary:

- Request Amendment to opening hours to 9:00-4:00pm to enable TA requests to be turned around and staff leave at reasonable time.
- Management bids and Discharge Decisions to be done centrally
- Better communication arrangements between HAC and Private Tenancy Unit and Social Care to join up support
- Dedicated phone number for Part 6 team to enable direct access from staff and public allowing HAC staff to focus on roofless cases
- Secure email addresses
- GR5 manager on duty at the HAC
- More printers/photocopiers and shredding machines as currently insufficient.

### **Response S3 - staff member**

Summary:

- Concerns raised about Newtown being the only office in relation to gang related activities.

### **Response S4 – group response**

Summary:

- Concerns around safety
- Details about the specifics of the roles in the new centre and what workers will be expected to do
- How staff will be recruited or allocated to the different teams
- Training to be provided
- Hours and how rotas will be sorted
- Parking and travel allowance
- How will work be managed, appointments booked
- Request to consider two HAC model instead
- How will information be communicated to the public?

**Response S5 - staff member –**

Request to know how to arrange a car park place at Lancaster Circus.

**Response S6 – staff member**

Summary:

- Concern that one HAC not sufficient for Birmingham and asking about other areas
- The proposed HAC isn't close to the city centre and involves too much travelling
- Differing practices should not be sufficient reason for moving to one centre
- Querying difficulties cited in securing officers in the south



## **Appendix 2D– Concerns raised by Trade Unions and Service Response**

The following is from correspondence between Doreen Brown, Unison Branch Equalities Co-ordinator (paragraphs with bullet points) and Jim Crawshaw, Head of Service for Homelessness and Pre-Tenancy (paragraphs in boxes)

### **REVIEW OF HOUSING HAC'S**

- Staff/members believe that having one HAC is likely to increase the footfall/demand and staff will have less time to carry out their homeless assessments, instead will be utilising most of their time on reception and interviewing homeless.

We currently take on average about 130 homeless applications a week and therefore are using the figure of up to a maximum of 140 homeless applications per week when preparing for the worst case scenario. We believe that this number will not increase through one HAC but if anything due to increased prevention work would decrease. There will only be the equivalent of one GR4 on reception at any one time. Additionally there will be in excess of 25 GR3s in the one HAC and therefore a number of homeless interviews will be conducted by them.

- Don't believe that the drivers for change within the Business Case can be achieved by introducing one HAC.

We disagree. Please set out which drivers for change you believe can't be achieved by having one HAC.

- Will present staff with more problems culminating from an increase in waiting time and customers becoming more agitated, putting staff at potential risk of violence. Also consistency of advice and assistance to customers is mainly achieved through proper training and effective management.

I disagree. Currently some customers can wait in the offices for a significant period before they are seen. In fact I received an e-mail from a member of staff at Sparkbrook this week that highlights that somebody waited over 2 hours to see a triage officer and as you know this is before we would see them. In regards to consistency it is more difficult, for whatever the reason, to have consistency for any service if staff are spread across more than one location. We know there are inconsistencies and staff have also raised this as an issue. Having one office will ensure consistency for staff and for customers and we will also provide a management presence within the Centre.

- Car parking is an issue at Newtown. Having to park on the main road can present potential safety risks. 72% of affected staff are female.

We will be ensuring that we secure as many parking spaces for our staff as possible if the proposal is accepted. We will work with staff to ensure this is distributed fairly and in particular for any staff who are working late but of course we will also need to consider disabilities and where people have a parking space as a reasonable adjustment. Although I accept this is a concern for staff and we will ensure safety wherever possible staff across locations park in the street and walk to their office location. Additionally there are direct bus routes that stop outside of the building. Currently the make-up of Homeless & Pre-Tenancy staff who work in the Newtown office is 77% female.

- Staff/members are requesting two HAC's in order to reduce the footfall, ensure safety and provide adequate parking space.

Having 2 HACs is, we believe, not possible with current staffing levels and would require more staff to ensure officers have time to make decisions etc. As you are aware the council is under no obligation to provide parking spaces for the majority of staff working for the organisation. In regards to the footfall the evidence we have provided regarding the building demonstrates its suitability.

- Why can't we have a slight increase in NAIS officers to cover over two HAC's.

The NAIS service is already reducing to an anticipated number of 38 advisors. This includes the 6 who will be working with us. In order to provide a welfare advice service across the city they require these staff to provide their service. There is no more capacity to give us any additional staff.

- 3 full time GR5 Officers will be sufficient to cover over 3 HAC's taking into account sickness absence. Currently GR5 Officers are barely visible at the HAC's.

There is no opportunity for us to have 3 HACs in the future model and all of the feedback from staff who are concerned about 1 HAC is that we should have 2 HACs. In the one HAC there will be a GR5 on duty every working day so obviously their visibility will increase significantly. If we had 2 HACs we would not be able to have 2 out of 3 GR5s on duty every day as between them they also have 28 GR4s to manage and attend other meetings etc. If we had more than one HAC we would need 4 X GR5 managers.

- Would like management to reconsider Sparkbrook HAC or adjoining building. We understand that BCC has 100 year lease on Sparkbrook building which has to be paid for regardless of whether it is occupied or not. As an alternative we already have existing Council buildings where there are no cost implications.

Sparkbrook is an expensive building and currently it is planned to be a lettings suite. The council is also considering the leasehold agreement. As it is not a CAB building the cost of the lease will fall on the service using the building and is a cost that we cannot meet. Additionally what is clear from the consultation is that the major concerns, apart from our own staff, is regarding customers living in the south of the city.

- No evidence to suggest that all options have been adequately explored.

Please be re-assured they have. We explored the option of 4 HACs, 2 HACs, a city centre HAC and then the proposal for one HAC in Newtown.

- Need to fully understand the rational of having floor walkers at Newtown.

In order to ensure that customers are only in the queue to see reception when they need to be. It is envisaged that they will be pulling people out of the queue if they have an appointment, taking housing application forms and give receipts and direct people who want other council services to these etc. They will ensure that people in the queue genuinely need to see someone on reception and therefore decreasing the times people need to wait to be seen.

- **Legal Services are there to provide advice and support over legal matters, however they have no experience over how we conduct our day to day business.**

I am unsure whether this question is in relation to the barrister opinion we received to move to one HAC or having legal advice in the One HAC, so I have answered both!

With regards to the legal advice regarding moving to one HAC this advice has come from a nationally renowned barrister, Andrew Arden QC, who has over 40 years' experience in the field of homelessness and represented us on the judicial review regarding gatekeeping. With respect his opinion is valued by us, including our own legal services and although he may never have worked on the front line his experience of defending and challenging Local Authorities is vast.

In regards to having a solicitor in the HAC this is specifically to provide legal advice and support to staff. As you know homelessness is a complex area of law and it is thought that this will support staff to undertake their roles. I am happy to reconsider this decision if Unison/your members don't believe it is appropriate.

- Require costing for Newtown HAC and inhouse Solicitor. Will this impact on saving targets for 2016/17/18.

Will not impact on savings. We already have a legal budget and rather than paying for a solicitor to be based in Woodcock Street the intention is to locate them with our team.

- Require footfall information to establish where the demand is.

Please refer to my e-mail on the 12<sup>th</sup> February that sets out the footfall information.

- Require staffing structure, outcome of customer questionnaire to be formatted into Equality Assessment Analysis.

The staffing structure was shared at the TU meeting regarding budget reductions. The Equality Analysis and the consultation documents will of course be shared once the analysis is completed of the consultation responses.

- **Ensure that we have a written response to UNISON's H&S request.**

Please refer to my e-mail on the 12th February that responds to the questions you submitted regarding H&S.