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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

8th November 2024

Start Point Sholing Day Nursery – End of Formal Consultation

I am writing to confirm the outcome following the formal 45-day consultation period which commenced on 2nd September 2024 and ended on 16th October 2024. All staff in scope were invited to a consultation meeting held on 13th September 2024 which outlined the proposals for the closure of the Day Nursery and allowed questions and feedback to be raised. A copy of the proposal and consultation documents were placed on the Live Restructures webpage on the staff intranet along with all other supporting documents.

Consultation Feedback:

One-to-one consultation meetings with myself were offered to affected staff to give the opportunity to have a further confidential discussion on the potential impact on your role. During these meetings any questions raised, and the subsequent feedback were included as areas for discussion within wider staff meetings and are summarised below:

- More information on applying for internal positions and requests for being placed on the redeployment register early. - Staff were provided with a copy of the policy and any member of staff who requested to be placed upon the redeployment register were actioned immediately.
- Interest in finding out more about Springwell positions – Contact was made with Springwell School who recommended informal discussions with Springwell HR Staffing Lead who arranged work experience days for nursery staff.
- Confirmation on notice periods and whether in certain circumstances this could be reduced – subject to the specific circumstances, the answer was yes subject to managers discretion.
- Clarification around redeployment within a school post which is solely funded through SCC – Contact with HR colleagues who provided advice and support to the individual.
- Clarification around whether employment through the Temporary Employment Agency (TEA) would be count as continuous service – HR undertook extensive analysis of the records and the individual outcomes for each staff member affected has been fed back.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Work Experience, Redeployment & Training/Support:

Following one-to-one discussions, staff who have opted in to the redeployment process have been placed on the redeployment register. Staff will continue to be supported to find and apply for suitable alternative employment where such opportunities exist.

Work experience opportunities across Children's Services & Learning for existing nursery staff to train and upskill have been communicated with staff and these include offers from the following services:

- **Educational Welfare Service** – Job shadowing and additional training including Safeguarding
- **SEND Service** – Job shadowing, SEND systems and IT
- **Family Hubs** – Signposting parents, Universal group support
- **Libraries** – Supporting existing library staff during structured family sessions e.g Rhyme Time, and craft sessions etc.
- **HR Recruitment Team** – provided training around CV building, Redeployment process and skills mapping and support around completing application forms etc.
- **Job Club** – Proposed training is arranged over coming weeks focusing on IT skills and further support for CV writing and preparation for interviews.
- **Further opportunities to extend skills have been provided** – Springwell shadowing, archiving, access to online training including early years development training course, L2 Understanding children's mental health, Dingley's SEND training, my learning modules and Language and Communication training.
- **Educational Psychologists support** – safe space to talk and debrief (to support staff Wellbeing)

During consultation staff requested additional support to improve their computer/digital skills, application, CV writing and interview skills. Training sessions were organised through various routes including:

- Application, CV writing and interview skills with the Councils Recruitment Team
- Computer Skills Course in partnership with SCC Libraries
- Online training courses

Also arranged to take place is an IT skills, job application, CV and interview skills session in partnership with the Employment Skills Team. This session for affected staff is scheduled to take place on 14th November, 10.00am to 1.00pm at Startpoint Sholing.

The Council's recognised trade unions have been kept up to date during consultation and will continue to be available to support staff. Please contact your TU rep directly should you wish to arrange a discussion with them. Unison members were provided with a verbal response at today's End of Consultation Meeting at Startpoint Sholing. A formal written response will be provided to Unison next week.

A number of questions were raised during the End of Consultation meeting (08/11/2024) and the responses can be found below;

If the decision is made to close the setting on 26th November...

- What will be our official last working day, and how does pay work (November / December pay, notice periods, holiday, when would redundancy or last pay be)? *The last working day for staff will be dependent on when notice is given and what the timescale is for the official closure date of the nursery. There is an option for staff to have an informal meeting with Darrin, or a formal dismissal hearing can be arranged which would be chaired by a Head of Service. Whether you opt to have an informal meeting or formal hearing your last working day will be agreed, pay in lieu of notice, outstanding AL entitlement and redundancy payment will be confirmed at that time and paid to you on the 23rd of the month following the last working day.*
- If you then want to go on the redeployment list at this point is it possible to join? *Staff were given the opportunity to go onto the register at the start of the consultation process in September 2024. Staff will be able to go onto the redeployment register up until the decision is made by Cabinet and an official closure date confirmed.*
- What happens if you have been on redeployment and not found anything suitable (do you have the same rights to notice periods/ redundancy) and how long can you remain on the redeployment list? *All staff with over 2 years continuous service have the same rights to notice periods and redundancy payments regardless of whether they have opted in or out of the redeployment process. If staff have been unsuccessful in finding alternative employment within the Council, last working day will be agreed, and they will leave the Councils employment with their final salary payment, pay in lieu of notice, outstanding annual leave and redundancy payment.*
- If you can stay on the redeployment list throughout the notice period what will work look like during this time? *If the decision is made to close the nursery and an official closure date agreed, staff can remain on the redeployment register up until their last day in service. Pay in lieu of notice would be given should the decision be made to close the nursery.*
- What happens if I am in the middle of a redeployment process? *If you have been offered a trial period in another job role, this would continue until then end of the agreed trial period. If the trial period is unsuccessful, you will leave with a redundancy payment.*
- What will happen with outstanding sorting of equipment including archiving for the nursery? *Alternative arrangements will be put into place*

If the decision is to restructure... This will depend on the Cabinet decision

- What is the restructure process? *A further separate consultation process will be required on the proposal.*
- Will those who want to take redundancy need to wait until the end of a restructure process? *This would be dependent on the Cabinet decision and any restructure proposal put forward.*

In addition, the draft Stakeholder Consultation summary is being analysed and should be ready for uploading onto the website next week.

It is important to highlight that although staff and stakeholder consultation has now closed, a decision will not be made on the future of the Day Nursery until Cabinet meet on 26 November 2024. During this time staff will continue to be supported and further confidential one to one meetings can be requested as and when you require them. Once Cabinet have confirmed their decision on the proposals, you will be notified of this at the earliest opportunity and what this means for you individually.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind staff that the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) can be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The EAP is a confidential and free service for Council employees who require support or advice on a range of subjects. The service can be accessed via the confidential helpline on **0330 380 0658** or you can visit the website: <https://vivup.yourcareeap.co.uk?CODE=110263>.

Should you have any queries in relation to the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

D Hunter

Darrin Hunter

Early Years Service Manager

Cc Trade Unions – Mark Roberts (Unison), John Early, Carol Wilson (Unite), Ali Haydor (GMB)