

Joint Statement By Neath Port Talbot Council and GMB/UCATT/UNISON/UNITE

Joint Commitment To Seek To Avoid Compulsory Redundancies

The Commitment

1. It is acknowledged by the Council and the Trade Unions that the scale of the budget deficit faced by the Council over the next four years means that a significant reduction in headcount is inevitable.
2. The parties to this Statement are, however, committed to working in partnership to address this deficit, to seek to safeguard the continuing employment to the maximum extent possible and for as long as possible, the Council's workforce from compulsory redundancies.
3. The Council and the Trade Unions both recognise the importance of stable and positive employee relations and are both committed to speedy and effective consultation and negotiation processes in relation to all proposed changes which affect the workforce.
4. It is recognised by the Council and by the Trade Unions that current levels of pay and conditions of service have been the subject of local and national negotiations over a number of years (including the job evaluation agreement), but it is accepted that a reduction in pay and conditions of service for employees – some on a temporary and some on a permanent basis - will assist to enhance job security for the Council's employees in the current challenging budgetary climate.
5. The Managing Change In Partnership Agreement which has been made between the Council and the Trade Unions will be the framework within which this change programme will be progressed.
6. Within this framework, the Council and the Trade Unions will actively pursue a range of measures to safeguard the employment of persons who wish to remain in the employment of NPT Council, including those set out below:
 - Natural turnover; non-filling of vacant posts;
 - Restrictions on external recruitment;
 - Two Tier Prior Consideration;
 - Reduction in the use of Agency Workers;
 - Promotion of flexible working and flexible retirement;
 - Minimising contractual overtime and reducing non-contractual overtime;
 - Employee Support Scheme arrangements to support employees affected by the Council's change programme;
 - Secondments;
 - Greater flexibility in organisational arrangements and job roles, alongside increased geographical flexibility and mobility;
 - Flexible movement of employees from lower to higher priority jobs, new roles and different location;
 - Redeployment;
 - "Bumped" redundancies;
 - Seeking of volunteers for voluntary redundancy; and
 - Maximising attendance at work, including a thorough review of sickness absence arrangements.

The implementation and operation of these measures will be monitored jointly through established management / trade union consultative arrangements.