

LIVEWIRE

Issue 9 January 96

UNISON Manweb Branch

JOB SECURITY ...NO GUARANTEES

The day Scottish Power announced the success of their take-over bid for Manweb, the Trade Unions sought the following assurances:

1. No compulsory redundancies
2. Continued Trade Union rights and negotiating arrangements
3. Protection of existing terms and conditions
4. Protection of pension rights
5. Continuation of the share save scheme

So far Mike Kinski has provided assurances on points 2 to 4. However the issue of compulsory redundancies remains unanswered. Although Mike Kinski is keen to stress that he wants to achieve all redundancies by voluntary means, no clear answer has been given to how this will be achieved in areas where departments are being reduced dramatically or closed completely.

Many staff fear that lip service is being paid to retraining and redeployment of such staff by certain managers. Indeed many staff have been told that the most likely option for them is VSS.

Despite this, integration plans suggest that most Manweb staff will be required for at least 12 months before being 'let go'. What arrangements are to be put into place for staff who are needed until some time in 1997 but not beyond? These

are the questions which must be at the forefront of negotiations in the next few months.

The scrapping of Manweb VSS terms in April 1996, the fear of redundancy on worse terms, the hint of further job losses on top of those already announced and the total restructuring of Manweb's business and locations has reduced morale to zero. If Scottish Power want to build a successful and thriving business they need to win the confidence of the workforce by tackling these questions with deeds not just words.

In the next 12 to 18 months the Trade Unions will be fighting tooth and nail to protect jobs and service conditions, a task which will require the active participation of all UNISON members in all locations and divisions.

DO NOT MISS..... the UNISON AGM

- ♦ have your say
- ♦ elect your representatives
- ♦ make the union work for you.
- ♦ **BE HEARD ! BE THERE !**

**Thursday 18th January
Head Office Canteen
6:00 p.m. onwards**

QUESTIONS A

The following are questions from Steve Williams, the full time UNISON officer and the replies from Mike Kins representatives if you are aware of any plans which contradict these assurances.

Q1 When will the structures for the various departments and businesses be available?

A This will vary across the different parts of the business, as explained in the briefings to staff. For example, Metering, Procurement and Transport are subject to a review for completion by March 1996; within Distribution, the management team is now in place and detailed structures are now being developed. The organisation structures will be developed on a "top down" basis and it will be the responsibility of the managers concerned to define and communicate their structures as soon as they have been decided. We are looking to complete the process by end March 1996 latest.

Q2 Will the posts within these structures be defined by job profile/descriptions?

A Job profiles will be produced where appropriate but there will be a significant number of posts where

there will be little or no change to existing responsibilities.

Q3 What processes will be used to fill them?

A Where organisation structures and staff are affected as a result of fundamental restructuring, in terms of geographical location, reporting authorities and the creation of new structures, then a matching process will operate which identifies job skill and competency requirements against employee preferences and capability. This will be co-ordinated by Human Resources.

Q4 If staff are displaced, will there be posts for those who wish to have a job with the company?

A There will be a small number of opportunities for "mixing and matching" redeployment opportunities, e.g. where a VSS application in one area would have to be refused, yet a replacement member of staff is available elsewhere in the organisation. It is unlikely

Department Round Up

Scottish Powers plans to close Manwebs Head Office heralds marks the biggest upheaval for staff since the regionalisation of Power Marketing. The difference this time however is that many staff have been told that their skills and contribution are no longer needed. Reports suggest that the new Head Office building

will house less than 50 staff. The most significant changes are in the corporate service areas, many of which will be transferred almost entirely to Scotland. Although not complete these include:

Pensions, Payroll, Internal Audit - all work to move to Scotland by March 97. It has been hinted that their specialist skills would make redeployment an unlikely option.

Property Services - department to be closed, no plans have been announced

for how Manwebs many properties are to be managed. **Legal** - most staff have been told their posts will be lost.



Where do staff fu

ND ANSWERS

ki supplied on 21st December 1995. We have reprinted them here for information. Please notify your union

that there will be sufficient posts available to accommodate all displaced staff, however, I re-emphasise that every effort will be made to ensure that the reductions required are met through voluntary means wherever possible.

Q5 If staff do not obtain a post in the new organisation, what will the Company be doing to assist them in finding redeployment?

A Communications to staff have referred to the Employee Assistance Programme. This is being driven by Human Resources and the attached leaflet [available from Union - ed] summarises the range of services which will be provided. In addition we will be talking to local employers to explore local job opportunities.

Q6 When will the future of the existing Depot locations be known and when will this information be made available?

A There are no current plans to close any Depots and the presentation to staff highlighted the need for Depots to cover remote areas and underpin the new Regional structure. The Regional Managers are undertaking a review of the activities to be undertaken from Depots and the detailed structure will be developed in the coming weeks, as referred to in 1. above.

Q7 Mention has been made of the Employee Assistance Programme. This programme lasts for 3 months, what happens to the staff at the end of this period?

A The programme, which is voluntary, has been designed so that, at the end of the programme, staff are prepared to leave. Please be very clear about my personal commitment that every effort will be made to ensure that the reductions required are met through voluntary means wherever possible.

Secretarial - department to be drastically reduced. Staff believe redeployment is unlikely.

Human Resources - 10 staff are to be lost but no plans have so far been made available to suggest how this will be done.

Information Services - department to be halved to 60 staff and all systems taken off the mainframe by March 97.

Finance - department to be devolved to the divisions with the loss of a significant number of staff. Staff were told options may include compulsory VSS.

Head Office Power Marketing and Distribution staff are to be devolved to regions or offered VSS. To date however, staff are not sure where they are likely to be relocated to or exactly what type of work will be required of them. With many questions remaining unanswered Trade Union representatives and officials continue to press for proper answers to these questions and are determined to fight for job security for all staff who want to stay with Manweb.



into the picture?

Changes must be by agreement

Manweb's Company Agreement includes section R on the right of staff and their representatives to consultation and full discussion of all proposals for change. It states that *'discussions about change will precede implementation'* and that it is *'the intention wherever possible to proceed by agreement'*. Also, where proposals involve a *'significant departure from current arrangements, the Unit Manager will notify the MJC Unions secretary [Steve Williams] as far in advance as possible, of any proposals he intends to put to staff and their accredited representatives.'*

The 'Procedural Agreement' also states that *'Where reductions in numbers are necessary*

the first priority will be to achieve these by natural wastage e.g. by the non-filling of vacancies, the non-use of temporary and contract staff'. It also talks of *'voluntary transfer, redeployment, retraining and voluntary selective severance'*.

Stewards should advise Steve Williams of any discussions and ensure that in their department there is full discussions between managers, staff and representatives of **all** proposed changes and that all questions and issues are resolved **prior** to implementation. Formal talks would be expected to take place in the Local Forums. Where major difficulties arise which *'cannot be resolved at unit level despite thorough discussions, these may be referred to the Joint Secretaries of the MJC for advice'*.

RELOCATION WHAT IS DUE TO STAFF?

The company agreement on relocation payments should be applied to all staff who are required to relocate and incur extra travelling costs. These are covered by section K of the Company Agreement. Although quite detailed the nub of the agreement is that ALL excess travelling costs should be reimbursed in full for four and a half years based on the excess mileage rate (currently 22p per mile).

Additionally, if the company agrees that a transfer necessitates a house move the employee may be entitled to be reimbursed costs for a wide range of things such as legal costs, mortgage redemption fees, estate agent fees, stamp duty, removal, furniture storage and travel costs as well as a relocation grant of up to £3,000. If the transfer is a compulsory transfer, excess housing costs may also be paid.

If you find yourself being required to relocate and believe that any of the above apply to you, make sure you establish, in writing exactly what is being offered and speak to your steward if you feel you are not being properly reimbursed.

Dave Read Publicity Officer

ARE YOU SAFE AT WORK

In a rapidly changing world our working environment is one constant and we need to ensure that we are not put at risk by unsafe practises or outdated equipment being used. Recently in one location 14" VDU's were replaced with 12" screens without consultation. As a result of staff complaints about eye strain they were replaced within 24 hours. With a number of recent re-organisations and further moves in the near future there should be a risk assessment on every workstation. If you are concerned about Health and Safety in your workplace don't keep quiet, let your local rep know.

Mary Morgan Queensferry Rep

JOIN UNISON TODAY

I hereby authorise subscriptions to be deducted from my salary at the appropriate rate and paid accordingly to UNISON.

Name.....

Employee Number.....

Location.....

SIGNED.....Date.....

(Please detach and send to UNISON, Shotton by Internal Mail or return to your steward)