



# COUNTER PROPOSAL FORM

## How to use this form

This form should be completed by an employee or group of employees who wish to present a counter proposal. Trade Union and employee representatives may also present Counter Proposals through the Collective Consultation process.

Only counter proposal forms that are approved, or partially approved will be published, so the process is as transparent as possible and people don't raise duplicate proposals.

Where consultation is taking place across EE and BT, any counter proposals that are raised by BT employees/representatives will be shared with the EE reps and any raised by EE employees will be shared with BT representatives.

## Process

- You should discuss the merits of your counter proposal in detail with your representative or line manager. If you decide to submit for consideration please complete the form together.
- Completed forms should be submitted to Programme ER team by your representative or line manager.
- The form will be logged by the Programme ER team during the Collective Consultation process.
- We will endeavour to respond within 5 working days, where this is not possible the person(s)/representative raising the counter proposal will be kept informed of progress.
- A decision will be made to accept/partially accept or reject the proposal along with a clear rationale.
- The outcome must be issued in writing and will be communicated to the proposer(s) and uploaded onto TBWP microsite.
- Proposals raised by individuals or groups of employees can be anonymous but the response will be dealt with in the usual manner, the outcome will be uploaded to TBWP microsite.

<b>Date Submitted</b>	24 July 2020
<b>Proposer Name</b>	John Ferrett
<b>Business Area</b>	Prospect Union on behalf of all members in Aberdeen
<b>Location</b>	Aberdeen
<b>Contact Telephone Number</b>	07880725821
<b>Contact Email</b>	John.ferrett@prospect.org.uk
<b>Representative Name</b>	



**Please confirm that you have considered the following criteria:**

- Preservation of our strengths and delivery of our strategy
- Counter proposal should have been discussed in detail with your line manager and/or representatives
- The proposal maximises operational efficiency and remains cost neutral
- Shows a positive impact on efficiencies
- Mitigation of any negative effects
- The proposal maintains consistency / parity with other areas within the business and seeks to avoid a potentially negative impact on people in other parts of the business
- It has been developed from a collective perspective, not from an individual viewpoint

**Which areas of the business are affected by your proposal?**

All CFUs, including Openreach, and areas of the business impacted by the proposal to close office accommodation in the Aberdeen area.

**Please provide details of your proposal**

- Prospect propose that all who wish to remain with the business are enabled to do so.

*We are always looking at ways to retain talent in our business and we are working closely with all of our colleagues in Aberdeen who are affected by our proposals; to understand their preferences and to meet these wherever we reasonably can. All affected colleagues have had the opportunity to complete an Expression of Interest to tell us what their preferences are. Those that have expressed a preference to remain with Openreach/BT are being given support by our internal Resourcing Specialists to assist them with their wishes where possible; and all affected colleagues are being treated as Priority Candidates for any available roles which gives them priority over and above other internal and external candidates.*



This can be achieved by a variety of mechanisms, that take into account the ability to perform most, if not all roles remotely. These could include:

- Allowing our members to continue working from home, as they have been doing successfully and productively for the past five months

*We realise that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges which has meant many of our colleagues have been; and still are temporarily working from home. Overall we believe in the power of teams and want to provide opportunities for our colleagues to connect, create and collaborate in a team environment for the benefit of our customers and our people.*

*Our people have shown resilience in the face of extraordinary circumstances and have adapted well to a temporary period of enforced homeworking. However, we do not believe that there is conclusive evidence to show that this relatively short-term response to a pandemic has been conclusively proven to be successful as a long-term measure or solution. Through our people surveys we have been informed by some of the respondents that they are feeling disengaged and socially isolated from their work colleagues. We're a very connected business and our success in the future will be built on nurturing and strengthening connections to drive brilliant customer experiences. Creating team environments, in brilliant workspaces where we can do our best work is vital to our long-term success*

*In line with Government advice we are developing plans to return people to offices; we are deliberately not rushing the planning stage and this is based on a pragmatic and measured approach that ensures we fully consider all aspects of the safety and wellbeing of our people. We have signified to Prospect following ongoing discussions that this plan is proposed to commence over the coming weeks.*

- Assigning them to a location for reporting and line management purposes, Requiring attendance at these locations on a limited basis under line management requirements.

*We will look to assign individuals to buildings that meet acceptable standards and allows people to generate and work within a collaborative team environment to the benefit of our customers and our colleagues. The act of assigning a location for reporting and line management purposes will not meet our requirements we will expect individuals to attend their contractual place of work on a regular basis. During the consultation period, where a person is at risk, we will seek to establish roles that are based at a long term location or colleagues who are mobile whilst taking into account individual circumstances, including any disabilities.*

- Allow for flexible working, including the provision of homeworking, by agreement with impacted employees.

*We do not view homeworking as a permanent solution to workforce management; and our vision pre-Covid-19 remains valid. We believe in the power of teams and want to provide opportunities for our colleagues to connect, create and collaborate in a team environment for the benefit of our customers and our colleagues. During individual consultation we will of course take into account individual circumstances, including any disabilities.*

- Provide alternative accommodation in Aberdeen to enable those who cannot work from home, or are required to attend an office to continue in employment with BT.

*We are proposing to not renew the lease in Aberdeen as it is cost prohibitive to do so. We are unable to provide a property solution in the Aberdeen area; as the current co-location strategy is not economically viable to support small numbers of people in roles that are not connected. It would be remiss not to point out that the standard of accommodation in office locations where we have small numbers of individuals working is not at a standard that we would deem acceptable accommodation for our employees long term future. It would be cost prohibitive to bring these up to an acceptable long term standard in terms of Health and Safety; Fire Safety and Disability Access requirements.*



### Rationale: please explain the reasons behind your proposal?

- Prospect believe it is wrong, both in terms of business strategy and the impact on our members' careers, for BT to no longer have a presence in Scotland's third largest city. It will also damage BT's reputation as a company located in every major town and city in the UK and give a signal that they are abandoning large parts of the UK as part of the Better Workplace Programme changes. BT are also in danger of denying itself the skills and experience of those who live in this area, with little apparent assessment of how the work currently carried out in Aberdeen will be performed if staff are made redundant.

*BT have already announced their long term location strategy. Maintaining a building in Aberdeen is cost prohibitive for people who are working in an area that has a reducing demand and as such would not be financially viable.*

*BT have announced their growth plans for their proposed sites across Scotland and the UK and have an on-going commitment involving long term investment across the UK. We cannot accept the point made around abandoning large parts of the UK, BT and also Openreach have a large engineering presence throughout the UK and will continue to do so.*

- Prospect believe that the remote working practices put in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have shown conclusively that people can work from home both productively and successfully.

*As per previous response; we do not view homeworking as a permanent solution to workforce management and our vision pre-Covid-19 remains valid. We believe in the power of teams and want to provide opportunities for our colleagues to connect, create and collaborate in a team environment for the benefit of our customers and our colleagues. During individual consultation we will of course take into account individual circumstances, including any disabilities.*

- Indeed, BT have signalled to the union that the majority of staff will not be returning to offices before the end of this year.

*In line with Government advice we are developing plans to return people to offices. We are deliberately not rushing the planning stage and this is based on a pragmatic and measured approach that ensures we fully consider all aspects of the safety and wellbeing of our people. We have signified to Prospect that following ongoing discussions that this plan is proposed to commence over the coming weeks.*

*We are assessing each location, line of business and workstream in order to ascertain which colleagues need to be brought back into the office sooner than others. This work is currently underway and as per previous responses we will continue to work with Prospect to facilitate the move back to office working as soon as practicable to do so.*

- Furthermore, with no sign of a vaccine, or the pandemic being brought to an end, we would expect homeworking to remain the default option within the business for some time yet. Therefore, the union believes it would be inexplicable to make people redundant at a time when they are unable to attend their current location or any new location because of Covid-19. Furthermore, it would be perverse to make people redundant when they can do their job from home and then distribute that work to others who are also only able to work from home.



- Finally, Prospect would question the efficacy and the legality of making people redundant, because their office is closing, when they had proved beyond doubt that the work can be carried out at home.

*As per previous response; we agree that all of our workforce has shown resilience in the face of extraordinary circumstances and some have worked to adapt to a temporary period of enforced homeworking. However, we do not believe that there is conclusive evidence to show that this relatively short-term response to a pandemic has conclusively proven to be successful as a long-term measure or solution. Through our people surveys we have been informed by some of the respondents that they are feeling disengaged and socially isolated from their work colleagues. We're a very connected business and our success in the future will be built on nurturing and strengthening connections to drive brilliant customer experiences. Creating team environments, in brilliant workspaces where we can do our best work is vital to our long-term success. During individual consultation we will of course take into account individual circumstances, including any disabilities.*

### **How will your proposal impact the business positively?**

### **Are there any aspects of your proposal that are negative - how would you address these issues?**

Prospect believe that our proposals will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on the business. These can be described as follows:

- The business will retain experienced and highly skilled managers who would otherwise be made redundant if they were unable to relocate.

*As per previous response above; we are always looking at ways to retain talent in our business and we are working closely with all of our colleagues in Aberdeen who are affected by our proposals; to understand their preferences and to meet these wherever we reasonably can. All affected colleagues have had the opportunity to complete an Expression of Interest to tell us what their preferences are. Those that have expressed a preference to remain with Openreach/BT are being given support by our internal Resourcing Specialists to assist them with their wishes where possible; and all affected colleagues are being treated as Priority Candidates for any available roles which gives them priority over and above other internal and external candidates.*

- The proposal will ensure business continuity.

*We will protect business continuity to ensure that we are able to deliver the required service levels for our customers throughout this transition period.*

- There will no requirement to redistribute the work currently being performed by members based in Aberdeen, but currently working from home
- This proposal provides an opportunity to formalise current homeworking arrangements for our members in Aberdeen.

*As per previous response above; we do not view homeworking as a permanent solution to workforce management; and our vision pre-Covid-19 remains valid. We believe in the power of teams and want to provide opportunities for our colleagues to connect, create and collaborate in a team environment for the benefit of our customers and our colleagues.*



- The proposal enables BT/Openreach to avoid any legal challenge to the decision to make people redundant even though they are currently not working from the Aberdeen office.

*We are always mindful that we fulfil our legal and contractual obligations and will ensure that throughout the period of consultation we review and identify suitable long term roles wherever possible. We have committed to Prospect that we will work with the union in identifying any available roles as a solution rather than compulsory redundancy.*

- Prospect believes that members can work just as productively, if not more so, when based at home. This appears to be confirmed by the company continuing with widespread homeworking even though the government are urging employees to return to the office.

*As per previous response above; in line with Government advice we are developing plans to return people to offices; we are deliberately not rushing the planning stage and this is based on a pragmatic and measured approach that ensures we fully consider all aspects of the safety and wellbeing of our people. We have signified to Prospect that following ongoing discussions that this plan is proposed to commence over the coming weeks.*

- The proposal avoids imposing long distance commutes on our members, and the deleterious effects that this can have in terms of health and wellbeing.

*We will always work to consult with our people to reach a resolution on their preferences where possible and will work within our agreed policies and processes to achieve this. We recognise that the nearest long term location is Dundee and that this may present a substantial change in travel arrangements for some of those individuals currently in Aberdeen. We have provided an Expression of Interest exercise which contains an option to take EVR up front for colleagues who would find this more attractive than any roles that may be available involving additional travel commitments.*

- The proposal has clear environmental benefits in reducing CO2 emissions from commuting and energy usage within office buildings.

*The aim is to remove our presence from a large number of aged buildings which are inefficient to maintain and heat. We propose to achieve this by placing our people in cutting edge energy efficient buildings. We have also made a conscious decision to place these buildings within reach of public transport links minimising the requirement to travel using modes of transport which are less eco-friendly. We are also making provision in our new buildings for those who walk and cycle to work which has intrinsic health benefits.*



Please enclose/insert any documentation that might support your proposal.

- *By 2045, we aim to be a net zero carbon emissions business. Reducing our carbon emissions intensity will be one of our KPIs from 2020/21 and is included in our 2020/21 annual bonus*
- *Helping customers cut carbon: Information Communication Technology could reduce UK carbon emissions by around 24% in 2030. Our products and services help customers cut energy, fuel and emissions by avoiding travel and being more efficient. This year, we helped them avoid c.13m tonnes of carbon. These products generated £5.5bn in revenue.*
- *Source BT Annual Report 2020*

*This quote refers to our product line and ambitions for delivery of services and products to our customers.*

*As per previous response; the aim is to remove our presence from a large number of aged buildings which are inefficient to maintain and heat. We propose to achieve this by placing our people in cutting edge energy efficient buildings. We have also made a conscious decision to place these buildings within reach of public transport links and therefore minimising the requirement to travel using modes of transport which are less eco-friendly. We are also making provision in our new buildings for those individuals who walk and cycle to work which has intrinsic health benefits.*

- *At BT, everyone is welcome - whoever you are, wherever you work, whatever your background.*
- *Philp Jansen message to staff 23 July 2020*

*This quote by Philip Jansen is taken from a statement he made underlining our commitment to equality and diversity. We have shared our approach in our Ethnicity Rapid Action Plan Campaign and Reverse Mentoring Programme to ensure we work rapidly and responsively in creating a truly diverse and equal company that everyone working in can be proud of ensuring we build our reputation as an employer of choice.*