

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

MINUTES

23 FEBRUARY 2016

- Chair:** * Councillor Kiran Ramchandani
- Councillors:** * Jeff Anderson Paul Osborn
 * Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick (1) * Ms Mina Parmar
 * Graham Henson * Pritesh Patel
- Representatives of HTCC:** * Clare Winder (2 vacancies)
- Representatives of UNISON:** * Mr S Compton * Mr J Royle
 * Mr D Butterfield * Mr D Searles
 * Mr G Martin
- Representatives of GMB:** Ms P Belgrave

* Denotes Member present
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

16. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor David Perry

Reserve Member

Councillor Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick

17. **Declarations of Interest**

All Agenda Items

Councillor Jeff Anderson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a retired member of Unison trade union.

Councillor Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a member of Unite trade union.

Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a former member of Unison trade union.

Councillor Kiran Ramchandani declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a member of GMB union.

18. **Minutes**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

19. **Petitions, Deputations and Public Questions**

RESOLVED: To note that none were received.

RESOLVED ITEMS

20. **Appointment of a New Employees' Side Representative**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment of Clare Winder of the National Union of Teachers as an employee representative.

21. **Part 2 of Annual Equality in Employment Report for 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015**

The Forum received a report of the Divisional Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development which set out Part 2 of the Annual Equality in Employment Report for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Following a brief overview of the report, the Divisional Director responded to Forum Members questions as follows:

- the workforce profile in the report did not include data relating to temporary agency staff or those staff working at partner organisations, carrying out work on behalf of the Council;
- he could not comment on why the numbers of those staff who declared themselves to be disabled tended to be lower on equalities monitoring forms than those on staff surveys. It may be that guidance regarding declaring disabilities needed to be more explicit in the future. This was however something that the Corporate Equalities Group was

considering, with a view to encouraging disabled staff to update their monitoring information;

- it was difficult to say why some Directorates, such as Environment and Enterprise had very low proportions of BAME staff in comparison to others. The under-representation of certain ethnic groups in certain professions could be a factor but this was a wider issue;
- the Council was committed to ensuring that re-deployees would be offered the option of applying for vacant posts ahead of agency staff. SAP was being used to capture this information and it would be available to share with the unions;
- historic data relating to the salary and grades of leavers was not readily available, however, he undertook to include this information in future reports.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

22. Harrow Unison LG Branch Report On Appalling Employment Practices in the 'Lift and Shift' of Harrow Council Staff & Management's Response

The Forum received a report of the Harrow Unison LG Branch which outlined the 'lift and shift' of four staff from one Directorate to another and their subsequently being served with notices of termination.

A Representative made the following points:

- the management of the 'lift and shift' and subsequent redundancies of the four staff had breached the Council's agreed employment protocols and corporate governance arrangements;
- the process in relation to the 'lift and shift' and subsequent notices of termination had not been carried out in an open and transparent manner and the consultation process in relation to these had been inadequate;
- management's attitude had been disrespectful towards these long-serving members of staff;
- those officers responsible should be held accountable and the staff in question should be redeployed as a matter of urgency;
- the Council's Human Resources practices should be improved and amended to ensure this type of occurrence did not recur in the future.

Officers advised that:

- the four staff in question had been employed in the Transformation Management Support Team in the Community Health & Wellbeing (CH&W) Directorate. As part of their MTFs savings proposals the four

members of staff in question were 'lifted and shifted' to Business Support and although they carried out business support type roles, they had not been put on BS gradings or had their role profiles changed, and therefore sat outside BS function;

- the restructure proposed by the Chief Executive in April 2015, as part of the wider organisational restructure, meant that the Business Support (BS) function, including the Transformation Management Support Team, was moved from the CH&W Directorate to the Resources Directorate;
- following assessment of the budget for this service it was noted that there was no budget for these staff and the service departments supported by the Transformation Management Support Team advised that the work carried out by three of them was no longer required;
- following consultation, the staff in question were given notices of redundancy. They had been offered the options of re-deployment and salary protection, however, they had not taken up these offers. The staff had also not appealed the decision to make them redundant.;
- two meetings had taken place between managers in CH&W and Resources to confirm that the work carried out by the Transformation Management Support Team was no longer required, although there was no formal paper or email trail to support this. However, the 2014 consultation pack, which had been shared with the unions, made it clear that the savings in the MTFs included the salaries of these 4 posts;
- it was the responsibility of HR to ensure that appropriate Council policies, processes and employment law were followed in relation to these 4 staff members, however, evaluating and overseeing budgets in relation to staffing requirements was not part of the HR function.

In summing up, the Chair urged officers to:

- make every effort to ensure re-deployment opportunities were offered to the three staff members in question;
- review HR and staff management protocols to ensure 'lessons were learnt' from these events; and
- that the Council's agreed employment protocols, corporate governance arrangements in relation to staffing and agreements with the unions should be adhered to at all times.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

23. Actions Agreed by the Employees' Consultative Forum - Sub Group

The Forum received a report of the Divisional Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development which set out the actions agreed at recent meetings of the Employees' Consultative Forum Sub Group.

It was noted that some of the actions arising from the meeting of 14 January 2016 relating to agenda item 4 – Consultation on Draft Revenue Budget 2016/17 and MTFS 2016/17 to 2019/20, had yet to be completed. The Chair undertook to chase up their completion.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.45 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR KIRAN RAMCHANDANI
Chair