

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: Date 17th December 2018

EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON: HOUSING DIRECTORATE

SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED

That the structure is for the benefit of the Council and not a select group of employees and that a structure customer focused is designed which is the requirement of the services itself.

That the person is held to full account for the reputational damage of LBH by portraying this organisation as a joke without consequences for actions that are wholly inappropriate, and that Managers are trained to respect and protect their staff and the Public a Safe working environment comes to mind

CHRONOLOGY:

DATE	ACTION	OUTCOME
30 th May 2018	Letter from Nick Powell to Housing Staff	Appx A, pages 1-4
10 th July 2018	Meeting for Housing Leadership Group	Appx B, pages 5-8
August 2018	Newsletter to staff	Appx C, pages 9-12
27 th Sept 2018	Meeting in Housing	Appx D, pages 13-20
18 th Oct 2018	Emails from KC to JD	Appx E, page 21-23
23 rd Oct 2018	Email from GM to PW	Appx F, page 24
24 th Oct 2018	Email from NP to GM	Appx G, page 25
26 th July 2018	Report submitted to ECF Sub Group (Appx 4 has been removed from this report)	For back ground information

REPORT

The GMB and Unison submits the ECF report directly relating to the housing directorate as a whole. The Divisional Director embarked on a process namely DMA without engaging with either of the recognised Trade Unions, knowing that there would be a probable impact on LBH staff within this area.

The other concerning situation witnessed by Unison was the total disrespectful treatment of the GMB Branch Secretary, whose substantive post is within the same Directorate, this emerged in meetings where a total dismissive attitude was evident for all participants to see.

Within the DMA process the Housing directorate outside any formal engagement entered into a programme which identified VR (voluntary Redundancy), all the forum is aware that any reference whatsoever to dismissal via redundancy enacts a formal consultation process, yet all Housing Senior managers are total oblivious to this basic point.

In furtherance both Unison requested and submitted a report to ECF sub-group after full compliance with other forums along the direction of travel. We are totally dumbfounded why the ECF sub-group actions points have not been attached to the overall ECF report tonight; this was an agreed action when the council introduced this lower stage forum?

The corporate director instructed the Housing Divisional Director and one of his Senior officers to meet with both Unions regarding the DMA, however this instruction was totally ignored, this ignorance would not be tolerated if an instruction to meet a Manager was levied at a lower graded member of LBH, yet here we are again where different rules are applied and only lower graded members of staff are held to account whilst those at a senior level amuck.

We the trade unions have moved forward in the story and have been engaged in a meeting to view the newly created structure, which should have been designed by the Divisional Director according to the documentation supplied. Yet and the debacle continues the structure were actually designed by the Heads of Services, who have gained an advantage and opted for a position of protectionism, not only regarding their higher than average salaries compared to other Heads of Service in the directorate as a whole. Also are the benefits they designed with compressed hours creating a structure to protect these hours and enjoy long weekends either opting for a Monday or Friday off, not any other day of the week for example a Wednesday?

It is now completely evident to both Unions that the senior Managers of housing have no desire to provide a structure beneficial for the customer, especially considering that Harrow has the smallest stock of any London Borough. The sole impact of job losses are in fact at the middle or lower end of the employment structure, this replicates the same old housing shenanigans that occurred under a previous DD of housing.

In furtherance is the comments declared by a senior manager acting in the position of the Divisional Director (Housing) at a recent DJC meeting, when challenged about career progression "what you mean Manual Staff" this reference clearly demonstrates the hubris approach to lower grade employees within the council as an employer, no consideration for the equalities position of a public employer.

It is evident and supported by a statement of the Corporate Director "where are the general principles of a restructure" we agree there is none, but only a position of lets save our jobs at the expense of customer focused service opting for the impact to be felt at a lower grade. The Senior Management Team have displayed a serious level of arrogance to both Trade Unions and have little if no respect or compliance of the councils rules in times of financial difficulty. Opting to feather their own nests, at the total Councils customers' expense, i.e. resident's leaseholders and other areas of social housing.

We now draw the forum attention to the another area of Housing in this case Housing needs, and the shambolic attitudes displayed by the senior staff in this area, these range from reputational damage to Harrow Council conducted in the most distasteful manner on external web-sites attached for all to view. Also is the complete failure to treat staff both in this area and outside with dignity and respect, placing them at risk of abuse, assault and avoidable injury. This is part of an investigation but a brief overview will not impact on the current investigation

Managers, have failed to notify any other area of the council to high risk customers, which was an agreement by the person responsible for the latest debacle in a meeting in 2015, therefore the air of arrogance continues unabated, it is a well-established fact that no one at a senior level is ever held to account for wrong-doings witnessed in this forum on an annual basis where data of disciplinary action only identifies lower grade staff held to account.

It is therefore about time that this organisation ensured that the rules are complied with by all LBH staff and not just enacted to lower paid LBH staff, which is the current select group arrangement. The council cannot disagree with the statement and request by the GMB and Unison, maybe then we will all be in it together, it is for the elected administration to ensure that the rules of employment are complied with and not broken time and time again for the previously stated select protected group.

This area of the council needs to be brought back into line with both the rules on conduct, but also the level of payment (salaries) with other parts of the directorate, especially when the council is financially restricted and need to save monies to survive, or is it one rule for us and other rules for the staff that deliver the services, when considering the level of responsibility in the lowest housing stack council in London.

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