

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: Date 30th January 2019

EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON: MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECF EQUALITIES REPORT 2017-2018

SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED

That the Leader and Opposition Leader provide unequivocal written commitment to the Unions that they will ensure that the rules of the organisation apply equally to all including the most senior levels and that a failure to comply with the rules of the organisation enacts personal consequences at all levels of the employment structure without fear or favour.

That the employer namely Harrow Council fully endorses and adopts the Governments Taylor review on the modern workplace without reservation.

Without these actions Harrow Council will remain in a time loop with the same old antediluvian culture, which has existed unabated and unimproved for decade upon decade.

CHRONOLOGY:

DATE	ACTION	OUTCOME
	Harrow Council Annual Equalities Report Supporting Employee Diversity Data 2017-2018 (pages 75, 76 & 87)	

REPORT

The Joint Union ECF report is submitted tonight which emerges from the known trend identified each year though the Councils Equalities report relating to the organisations rules accompanied with Responsible Corporate Governance and a report fully compliant of the ECF Terms of Reference.

This matter has a known detrimental impact on the lowest paid staff across the council's employ, and a situation which we can only reasonably describe as a misuse of public monies. In furtherance and supporting the Unions position is the Government's Good Work document which is a response to the Taylor Review of modern working practices. This document further supports and corroborates the known situation and the fact that the Councils workplace 'remains in a dark era of history'.

Firstly we would draw the forum's attention to the Single Status Agreement implemented into this Organisation from 2004 to 2007. This agreement was to bridge the gap between white collar and blue collar workers (employees). However, in certain sections of the council's employ it has in fact widened the gap through total mismanagement; deliberate or otherwise.

Single status set out certain working conditions for former APT&C and Manual Grades, the London Agreement was to enact a 36hr working week for white collar workers within

Harrow Council, and a 36 standard plus 4 hour contractual overtime for Manual workers. As a result of this debacle certain white collar worker received compensation for a reduction in hours from 39 hours to the agreed 36, and of course increases of 5.4% on the overall salary figure?

However in certain sections of the council's employ white collar workers received the compensation figure, and also, received an unentitled 4 hour contractual overtime payment, therefore receiving the compensation for the reduction in hours, but then to be re-instated by an increase of 4 hours extra payment! Some would say that not only is this is milking the system but goes much further by rubbing the noses of the less fortunate operational staff in the dirt.

This shambolic action widened the gap between this section of the council's workforce, and despite management being aware of this financial loss and gross irregularity, no remedial action was ever taken by them to address the situation whatsoever. This situation has left a very bitter taste in the mouth as it has enacted a detriment to the manual workforce who have not had a grade review since 2004, whilst white collar workers have seen a grade increase through every restructure.

The cost of this mismanagement to this council needs to be fully defined. Not only have the redundancy payments for the group of favoured workers mentioned above been enhanced together with the pension implications, but additionally, the Death in Service payment increased by 4 hours contractual unentitled payment over a period in excess of 14 years!

This known direction of travel demonstrates the low value placed on the manual workforce by Harrow Council, particularly when one considers those at the frontline, who can ill afford the high cost of living in and around London, never mind the above financial inequalities cited above. This action completely identifies the imposed detriment for a Manual worker not only whilst in the employ of LBH but also compounded at retirement age where further poverty is enacted by a failure of LBH to follow their own organisations rules.

Let's view the content of the Taylor review on responsible Corporate Governance, this is in fact **'good management and strong employment relations within an organisation, which is why it is important that companies are seen to take good work seriously and are open about their practices and that all workers are able to be engaged and heard'**.

It should be noted that the above highlighted extract from the Taylor review in no way, shape, or form, reflects the appalling modus operandi enacted by this organisation. An organisation where Senior Managers are never held to account, (again this fact is portrayed every year in the Equalities report), where the rules of a Public employer are selectively applied and only to those at the lower end of the wage structure. As demonstrated above, a two tier employment structure fully supported by the employer.

The Unions would draw the forum's attention to the Government's Five Principle Strategy. This is listed below:

- (a) Overall worker satisfaction
- (b) Good Pay
- (c) Participation and Progression
- (d) Wellbeing, Safety and security
- (e) Voice and Autonomy

All the above five key Government principles only seem to apply to an upper tier of the council's employment structure even though agreement of the five key principles was supported by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD). This we assume applies to the council's HRD lead.

We all need to provide an honest approach, and openly declare that the Equalities Yearly Report on Accountabilities **only applies to those at the lower end of LBH structure.** Accountabilities or to be more precise rules, honesty, and supporting documentation state and demonstrate that this organisation fails to have any responsible corporate governance whatsoever. We therefore invite a challenge from the employer on this salient point through their own yearly reporting mechanism. (Not to mention the countless peer reviews and independent reports over the years that have highlighted the appalling management culture within Harrow Council.)

In furtherance is the Taylor Review comprehensive response on a Fair Deal, this passage identifies a real problem with the council's employment structure: The Government recognises the real issue that one-sided flexibility can cause for working people and their families. This was brought to the attention of the forum at the previous meeting, in that MG graded staffs are by and large required to work the hours required for business needs. Yet in this council the attitude is one of a hubris approach. We directly refer to a 'feather the nest' situation of managers openly stating 'let's only do 36hrs but compress our hours to four days per week so we have an extended weekend'! In addition we request what is the overall cost across the organisation related to 36 hours for MG grades and not as the contract stipulates hours for the needs of the business?

The above paragraph sadly reflects the truth, and widens an even further gap between the lower grades and senior staff; this in the Unions opinion does not represent either value for money or customer expectations, but solely a benefit for the highest earners of a public salary, whilst all others are not afforded a Fair Deal.

Harrow Council is the largest employer in Harrow, yet failure to apply the organisation's rules equally demonstrates an employer failing in its legal and moral duties relating to both a Fair Deal, and an organisation which professes to support equality. This cannot be denied or defended as the organisation's own documents support this sorry state of affairs and damns a council with no real comprehension of Responsible Corporate Governance.

The report honestly demonstrates a real lack of value placed on lower graded staff within the organisation, both pay conditions and equality relating to the Governments principle of a Fair Deal. Yet these staff are, the foundations of any political employer, those that make a real difference to the customer, and of course those who by their employ win or lose political elections for the political parties. We have to ask how and why we have arrived at this sorry position in 2019.

At this stage we must question the current management topic of 'Core Services' together with an anticipated increase of 4.5% in council tax next year? Looking at these proposals logically one might say "if we are removing other non-core services there will be a saving in money so why then do we need to increase council revenue? Of course looking at all the points mentioned above and the existing two tier management culture within this organisation an outside observer might guess that the increased revenue is needed to further enhance management terms and conditions?

What we do know is that with this type of strategy there will only be two losers namely the non-core staff that will lose their jobs (many of whom are in fact residents) and all the other residents of this borough that will be paying more for less services???

Any draconian cuts to the council's services coupled with an increase in council tax is guaranteed to attract national media interest leading to further reputational damage, again another unfortunate oversight by this council.

Finally, we can mirror this Council to a premier league Football club in regards to accountability, where the manager fails to deliver and the Club provides a handsome payment for an exit to happen. This has been the ethos and practice of this Council, maybe to hide the embarrassment, or perhaps in reality is it because management culture is so imbedded that it is incapable of applying the organisations rules. Without rule or governance the Council is at risk legally, something that time after time it constantly fails to appreciate or recognise.

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