

# EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

## 30 JANUARY 2019

<b>Chair:</b>	* Mr D Searles	
<b>Councillors:</b>	* Camilla Bath	* Angella Murphy-Strachan
	* Philip Benjamin	* Mina Parmar
	* Pamela Fitzpatrick	* Adam Swersky
	* Graham Henson	
<b>Teacher Representatives:</b>	* Ms L Crimmins	- NUT
	* Ms A Lyons	- NAHT
<b>Unison Representatives:</b>	* Mr D Butterfield	* Mr G Martin
<b>GMB Representative:</b>	* Ms P Belgrave	

\* Denotes Member present

### 12. Attendance by Reserve Members

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

### 13. Declarations of Interest

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Items 7/8/9 – Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2020/22/Employees' Side Report on Matter Arising from the ECF Equalities Report 2017-18/Response Report from Management to Matters arising from the ECF Equalities Report 2017-18

Councillor Adam Swersky, a member of the Forum, declared an interest in agenda items 7, 8 and 9. In relation to agenda item 7, his interest related to his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Finance. In relation to agenda items 8 and 9, he stated that he was a member of the Unite Union. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Graham Henson, a member of the Forum, declared an interest in agenda items 8 and 9. He stated that he was a member of GMB (General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union), an Honorary member of CWU (Communication Workers Union) and a former member of Unison. He added that his cousin was an employee of the Council. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick, a member of the Forum, declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 8 and 9 in that she was a member of the Unite Union. She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan, a member of the Forum, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a member of the Teachers' Union, NASUWT (The National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers). She would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

#### **14. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2018 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment to Minute 9 (Annual Health and Safety Report and Current Update), page 14 of the agenda, 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point, 1<sup>st</sup> line, which should read as follows:

'the report had understated the incidents in the Civic 1 reception area. A poll had been carried out with the security offices regarding the incidents in the Civic Reception area and there had been six incidents which were subsequently confirmed by the Corporate Director of Community in writing. The officer ...'

#### **15. Matter Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2018**

##### Minute 7 – Harrow Unison LG Branch and GMB Harrow Branch Report on Housing Directorate

A Unison representative expressed concern that the resolution at Minute 7, page 13 of the agenda, had not been actioned since the December 2018 meeting. The representative stated that the Unions had not been informed of any progress/outcome and that no meeting(s) between the Unions and the Portfolio Holder had been facilitated as undertaken by the Corporate Director of Community. He understood that the Housing Review process had continued. He added that the lack of progress that had been made had further compromised the relationship with the Unions and he questioned the

intended role of the Forum. Moreover, the employer appeared to have failed to comply with the Council's Recognition Agreement in relation to the Housing Review.

In response, the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning referred to the communication sent to the relevant Portfolio Holders and Unison by the Corporate Director of Community updating them on the progress and action taken following the last ECF meeting in regard to the Housing restructure. He stated that two meetings had been held with management and the relevant Trades' Unions. The next steps agreed by all parties were:

- (a) officers to draft a report for the Portfolio Holders in response to issues raised at the December 2018 meeting of the Forum;
- (b) to present the report to the Portfolio Holders at a joint meeting with Management and the relevant Trades' Unions;
- (c) to advise the Portfolio Holders of progress made in advance of the meeting of the Forum scheduled to be held on 30 January 2019;
- (d) to review and record why the restructure process had not followed the 'Change Management' policies and procedures and identify the lessons learnt.

In response to questions from the Council side representatives, the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning replied that the communication had been sent to the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Finance and Resources. He did not see why the shadow Portfolio Holders could not be given access to the communication and he undertook to take their request back to the Corporate Director of Community, although it was acknowledged that both shadow Portfolio Holders were also members of the Forum.

The Council side representatives present at the December 2018 meeting of the Forum stated that they had expressed strong views on the manner in which the Housing Review had been conducted and they were disappointed with the lack of action taken on the recommendation. They too ought to be informed of the communication.

Following a question from a Unison representative about the date of the communication, the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning stated that it had been sent that day and that he had intended to provide feedback at this meeting.

Another Unison representative stated that it had taken some 6 weeks from the decision to communicate this message and he once again questioned the role of this Forum which he considered to be of no worth. He was of the view that there was no meaningful consultation through the Forum. He suggested that Unison refer the matter to the London Region.

## 16. Petitions, Public Questions and Deputations

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions, public questions or deputations were received at the meeting.

## RECOMMENDED ITEMS

### 17. INFORMATION REPORT - Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2020/22

The Forum received a report of the Director of Finance which set out the draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019/20 to 2020/22, as reported to Cabinet at its meeting held on 6 December 2018. The Forum was informed that the budget and MTFS would return to Cabinet, which would submit its recommendation to full Council in February 2019 for final approval. The Director explained that this was the formal consultation process on the budget with the ECF, whose comments would be submitted to the February 2019 meeting of the Cabinet by inclusion of this minute as an appendix to the Budget Report.

The Director introduced the report and outlined the following key aspects of the report:

- table 1, page 24 of the agenda, set out the position in relation to the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) received by the Council which had reduced by 97% over a 7-year period;
- paragraph 1.5, page 25 of the agenda, set out the external funding position with the Council being one of the lowest funded Councils in London. Harrow's revenue spending power per head continued to be lower than the London average;
- the Council's social care budget continued to be under significant demand pressure and there was uncertainty surrounding future funding of local government. No assumptions had been made in the three year MTFS other than those factors known to minimise risk.

The Director reported on the challenges facing the Council on the delivery of the 2018/19 budget. She emphasised the need to maintain the Council's financial standing and to protect front line services. She referred to the pressures both in the Adults Division and the Community Directorate.

The Director informed the Forum that the Council was required to set a balanced budget for 2019/20 and referred to table 2, page 29 of the agenda. She referred to the provision of an agreed 2% pay award for 2019/20 and mentioned that the same figure had been assumed in the 3-year MTFS. She referred to paragraph 1.39, page 33 of the agenda, which set out the savings and growth put forward in the budget for 2019/20. The growth related to frontline services.

The Director stated that reserves and contingencies also needed to be considered in the context of the budget and re-iterated the need to protect the Council's good financial standing. The Council did not have large cash reserves and, as a result, it had limited ability to 'smooth out' funding gaps or invest.

In concluding her remarks, the Director stated that consultation on the budget had commenced in December 2018 and would continue until its consideration by full Council in February 2019. She invited comments on the report.

The Employees' side representatives asked questions on the budget, which were responded to as follows:

**A large sum of money had been spent by the Council in relation to the redevelopment of the Depot and the Regeneration Programme as a whole. There was also a delay in the Programme. How much money had been spent/wasted on the Regeneration Programme and what impact would it have on members of the Trades' Unions and the services they provided?**

In response, the Director of Finance stated that whilst a review of the Regeneration Programme was underway, she did not consider that the money spent to date could be considered to have been wasted. She informed the Forum that £25m had been spent on the Regeneration Programme to date, £10m of which had been used to buy the 72 affordable units at Gayton Road to support the homelessness budget. All the 72 units were occupied. Land assembly work, totalling approximately £5m, had been undertaken to enhance land value during the Regeneration Programme. The design of the proposed new Civic Centre Project was being reviewed, including the project finance, and work undertaken to date was informing the future direction to ensure best value from sites.

The Director of Finance responded to the impact of the Regeneration Programme on jobs and services. As an example, she explained the financial benefits from the Gayton Road development which were supporting the revenue budget, including staff and care budgets, which prevented the need for additional savings. The 72 affordable units were generating £500k savings against the temporary accommodation budget which had been built into the MTFs. The 53 units at Gayton Road were to be rented on the open market and would generate a significant return to the Council which, once confirmed in the business plan, would be built into the budget. There were a number of schemes that had helped to support the Council's revenue budget, otherwise additional savings to those already proposed would have been necessary.

A Council side representative added that the Regeneration Programme was vast and complex. It also included various sites in Harrow Town Centre, including Gayton Road, together with the provision of affordable housing, and the proposed new Town Centre Library. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had helped to bring in additional income. It was important to recognise that the Regeneration Programme had provided new employment opportunities.

Another Council side representative stated that he too did not consider that money had been wasted on the Regeneration Programme. He added that it was important to recognise that the Council did not have large cash reserves and this aspect needed to be factored in as part of the Regeneration Programme. It was important that the design of the proposed new Civic Centre was fit for purpose. The situation was compounded by the uncertain economic climate and Brexit, which had resulted in construction companies 'pausing' on their planned developments. Fluctuating house prices and the cost of building materials were also an issue. The existing Civic Centre was situated on a major development site, Poets Corner site, with borrowing levels originally at £350m. The Council needed to weigh the pros and cons, assess the levels of risk associated with the various aspects of the Regeneration Programme and reassess the proposed scheme at Poets Corner to secure maximum commercial return and the delivery of affordable housing. The Poets Corner site was directly linked to the new Civic Centre project. As a result, the Council needed to ensure that the Regeneration Programme did not place a burden on the General Fund. Otherwise, the government would step in and close down services. In response to a further question from an employees' side representative, the Member stated that it was not intended to make a loss on the Poets Corner site and housing would form a key element on this valuable site.

**What costs were associated with empty housing units on the Grange Farm estate who were now occupying properties in Gayton Road?**

The Director of Finance agreed to provide this information separately.

**What was the spend on salaries for the 'old' and the 'new' regeneration teams?**

In response, the Director of Finance agreed to provide this information separately.

**When would the refresh of potential impact on FTE (full-time equivalent), as a result of the budget be provided?**

In response, the Director of Finance stated that there would be a small reduction in FTE. The potential FTE impact of the budget would be included in the final budget report but she undertook to provide the employees' side with final figures in advance of the final budget being published. She confirmed that £300k of growth at item 3 on page 48 of the agenda would be removed from the final budget.

In conclusion, the Chair outlined the information required, such as the percentage spend on salaries for Regeneration, loss of rental income on Grange Farm estate, and potential impact on FTE of the budget. The Director of Finance undertook to send the relevant information to all members of the Forum.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Cabinet)

That the report be noted and the comments of the Forum be submitted to February 2019 Cabinet meeting for consideration.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To ensure that the views of the Forum were submitted for Cabinet's consideration.

**18. Employees' Side report on: Matters Arising from the ECF Equalities Report 2017-2018**

The Forum received a submission from the Employees' side in relation to the matters arising from the Equalities Report 2017-18, which had been considered at its last meeting. The submission at agenda item 8 was considered in conjunction with the response report from the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning at agenda item 9.

The Employees' side presented the joint report. A representative of Unison read out, in full, with minor variations, the report at agenda item 8, which was appended to the minutes at appendix 1, following which he set out the decision requested as set out below:

- that the Leader and Opposition Leader provide unequivocal written commitment to the Unions that they would ensure that the rules of the organisation applied equally to all including the most senior levels and that a failure to comply with the rules of the organisation would enact personal consequences at all levels of the employment structure without fear or favour;
- that the employer, namely Harrow Council, fully endorse and adopt the government's Taylor review on the modern workplace without reservation.

The Unison representative stated that without these actions, Harrow Council would remain in a time loop with the same old antediluvian culture, which had existed unabated and unimproved for decade upon decade.

The Chair then invited the Management to present their Response Report. The Head of Employee and Customer Relations introduced the report at agenda item 9 and outlined the following salient points:

- in relation to the Taylor Review, the Council would comply with agreed recommendations when these were implemented by the government;
- the issue of contractual overtime, which ought to have ceased for some staff as a result of the Single Status Agreement but had not, was being addressed;
- the allegation that Peer Reviews over the years had highlighted the appalling management culture within Harrow Council were not correct;
- the contractual requirements for staff on MG Grades was a standard working week of 36 hours with additional hours, if necessary, to discharge the duties of the post;

- the number of leavers at the top two pay bands would be low as there were few employees in these senior grades.

A Unison representative referred to page 5, paragraph 3, of the officer's report as set out on the supplemental agenda, which stated that, in relation to the issue of contractual overtime, there had been no detriment to manual workers. He challenged this assumption and pointed out that there had been four restructures but that no review of their grades had been undertaken, whilst the management grades had been reviewed and upgraded.

The same Unison representative added that the Ofsted Report had been carried out in 2016 and not 2018 at a cost of £5m. The representative refuted that the reference to the working hours of staff on MG Grades was incorrect in the report submitted by the Employees' side, as it also referred to a minimum of 36 working hours. He noted that honoraria payments were at the discretion of the relevant Chief Officer but pointed out that the majority of the 11.1% MG graded staff who were dismissed left with a 'settlement' agreement and their departure could not, therefore, be classified as a dismissal. He also cited case law relating to 'Fulton and others v Bear Scotland' and the issue of overtime in holiday pay which had been brought to the Council's attention by the Unions. People working overtime could claim for additional holiday pay. He pointed out that staff on MG grades should not have been compensated.

Additionally, staff that were made redundant and had been paid overtime (that they might not have been entitled to) would have left with enhanced redundancy payments as redundancy was based on all the hours worked.

He stated that the Council could not continue to make payments that staff were not entitled to. This issue had been raised by the Unions, initially in 2004, but successive Administrations had ignored it. Poor management practices had not helped. The money lost could have been invested in other services. It was important that the Council recognised the value of lower graded staff that were the 'backbone' of the Council. He requested that the Leader of the Council ensure that the rules were complied with and that they applied to all staff fairly. He questioned why staff surveys had not been undertaken recently and whether it was because the management and the Administration were concerned that it would result in a 'critical' report.

A Council side representative referred to the analogy drawn by the employees' side about large payments made by football clubs to departing footballers and stated that he did not recognise a similar culture in Harrow in recent times. With regard to the Taylor Review, he made the following observations:

- it did not go far enough and it formalised the dependant contractor status;
- the principle of flexible working was correct but it was not clear how this could be enacted.

He agreed that the rules of the Council should apply equally to all staff, including those at senior levels. He was confident that the Leader of the

position would support his sentiments. The responsibility of implementing this lay with Head of Paid Service. He was disappointed that following a review in 2011/12, the issues being considered remained on the agenda.

An Employees' side representative stated that it was not for the Unions to 'police' such issues. Over a 12-year period, the Unions had written many letters to various officers and Members highlighting the issue of payments made to staff that were not entitled to them. He referred to the modernising of terms and conditions and pointed out the amount of money that had been wasted due to enhanced redundancies and pensions paid. He asked for the costs to be identified.

A Council side representative asked about the staff survey, the total costs of the overpayments made and how many reviews had been conducted over the 12-year period. In response, the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning stated that the incoming Chief Executive would be considering whether to commission a staff survey. He undertook to provide the total costs of overpayments made.

The Director explained that this issue had been brought to his attention in December 2018 and, since then, a process for resolving the issue had been agreed. The staff affected were mostly based in the Community Directorate. He asked the Employees' side representative to send all the past communication sent to managers and Councillors, including the responses received, to him, but assured the Forum that steps had been put in place to resolve the issue. He undertook to keep them informed.

It was noted that former managers could not be compelled to come back to answer questions. It was acknowledged that it had been the first time in 12 years that a Director had stepped in to help resolve this issue.

The Head of Employee and Customer Relations responded to questions on redundancy payments and flexible working policies. He informed the Forum that for redundancy, Harrow paid more than the statutory minimum and he referred to the redundancy calculator available on the intranet. He explained the Council's compressed working hours policy allowed staff to reduce the length of their working week. It allowed employees to work their total number of which contracted week hours (36 hours or less) over a shorter period – 4 days a week or a 9 day fortnight.

A Council side representative stated that in his capacity as the relevant Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, he would raise some of the wide ranging issues raised at the Forum with the incoming Chief Executive. It was important that managers treated all staff equally.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND (unanimously):** to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships, Devolution and Customer Services

That

- (1) the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition provide unequivocal written commitment to the Unions that they would ensure

that the rules of the organisation applied equally to all including those at the most senior levels and that a failure to comply with the rules of the organisation would enact personal consequences at all levels of the employment structure without fear or favour;

- (2) the employer, namely Harrow Council, fully endorse and adopt the final outcomes from the government's Taylor Review on the modern workplace.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To ensure that the rules were applied equally to all staff and that some staff were not affected adversely.

**19. Response to an Employees' Side Report on Matters Arising from the ECF Equalities Report 2017-18**

See Minute 18.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.40 pm, closed at 9.18 pm).

(Signed) DAVIS SEARLES  
Chair

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: Date 30<sup>th</sup> 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:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
	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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