

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM**5 JULY 2005**

Chair: * Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan

Councillors: * Mrs Bath * Mrs Joyce Nickolay
 * Billson (1) * N Shah
 * Currie * Toms

Representatives of HTCC: (Currently no appointees)

Representatives of UNISON: * Ms M Cawley Mr K McDonald
 * Ms S Duffell * Ms D Prasad
 * Ms A Jackson * Shankar Sivashankar
 Mr G Martin

* Denotes Member present/Employee Representative present
 (1) Denote category of Reserve Member

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**143. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment at the meeting of Cabinet on 19 May 2005 of Councillor Marie-Louise Nolan as Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.

144. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Janet Cowan	Councillor Billson

145. **Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in that he was a lifelong member of UNISON. Councillor Toms declared a personal interest in that he was a lifelong member of the NUT.

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was also declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
15. Middle Management Review	Councillor Currie	Declared a prejudicial interest and accordingly he left the room and took no part in the discussion or decision-making on this item.

146. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
7. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting	This report was not available at the time the main agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider the report, in order to receive an update on issues discussed at the last meeting.
11(a). Health and Safety Executive Management Inspection 2005	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider the report in order to receive the outcome of the HSE management inspection and to be informed of the action plan

		developed to address the issues raised.
11 (b).	Stress at Work Project	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider the report to receive information on action being taken to address the issue of stress at work, in accordance with the Forum's previous request.
12.	Recruitment and Selection Practises	This report was not available at the time the main agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider the item in accordance with the Forum's request to receive a report on the Council's recruitment and selection practises.
14.	Failure to act on Hazard Notice issued to Children & Families – Millmans Resource Centre	This report was not available at the time the main agenda was printed and circulated. The Forum was asked to consider the item to receive a report on concerns regarding health and safety raised by UNISON.
15.	Middle Management Review	This report is a response to the concerns set out in the employees' side report on the Middle Management Review. Members were asked to receive the report to consider the response.
16.	Investigation Requested by the Employees' Consultative Forum	This report was a late addition to the agenda. Members were asked to consider the report, to update the Forum on an issue arising from the last meeting.

(2) agenda item 15 be considered as the first item of substantive business;

(3) agenda items 13 and 16 be considered together; and

(4) all items be considered with the press and public present with the exception of the following items for the reasons set out below:

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
14. Failure to act on Hazard Notice issued to Childrens & Families – Millmans Resource Centre	This item contained exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it referred to a particular employee.
16. Investigation Requested by the Employees' Consultative Forum	This item contained exempt information under Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it referred to a particular employee.

147. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

RESOLVED: That Shankar Sivashankar, an employee side representative, be appointed as Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2005/2006.

148. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 136 – Staff Survey and Strategy for People Progress Report
Add "Several Members offered to join staff in a refuse collection".

149. **Matters Arising from the Last Meeting:**

- (i) Minute 136 - Staff Survey and Strategy for People Progress Report
A representative of UNISON reported that following discussions with employees, arrangements had been made for Members to participate in a refuse collection.

- (ii) Minute 141 - Attacks on the Integrity of the Branch and its Officers
It was reported that no discussions had taken place to review the facilities agreement with UNISON.

RESOLVED: That the matters arising from the last meeting of the Forum be noted.

150. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

151. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

152. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

153. **Middle Management Review:**

A representative of UNISON advised that a report relating to this item had not been distributed with the agenda papers, as UNISON had been informed that the report dealt with matters that did not fall within the Forum's terms of reference. The representative of UNISON expressed the view that the Middle Management Review (MMR) process was having an adverse effect on staff, and requested the Forum to consider the report. The Chair informed Members that she had been advised that the report considered matters that were subject to ongoing procedures relating to individual employees. At the suggestion of UNISON the Forum,

RESOLVED: To (1) withdraw reports relating to the Middle Management Review from the agenda; and

(2) hold a special meeting before the summer recess to consider issues surrounding the Middle Management Review.

154. **Health and Safety Report:**

The Forum received two reports of the Executive Director (Business Connections), the first of which detailed the outcome of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Inspection 2005 and provided Members with an action plan that had been developed to address the issues arising from the inspection. The second report provided information on action being taken to address the issue of Stress at Work.

An officer reported that the HSE had visited Harrow Council on 31 January 2005 for a two-week inspection of the Council's health and safety procedures. Members were referred to the post-inspection Action Plan at page 7 of the third supplemental agenda. The action plan had been developed in response to the HSE's findings, in line with the Council's obligations. It was added that the HSE would return after one year to chart the progress made by the Council. An officer also reported that the Health and Safety Partnership Board, consisting of Health and Safety 'champions' from each directorate, had been charged with monitoring progress on the action plan and ensuring that the directorates were adhering to the Council's procedures. A representative of UNISON felt that staff needed to be involved in the process. An officer clarified that the Partnership Board was an attempt to tackle health and safety on a strategic level and added that it was in its initial stages. The Chair added that health and safety was not solely a human resources issue but rather a matter of importance across the Council.

A representative from UNISON warned the Forum of the seriousness of problems relating to stress. It was the UNISON representative's view that the level of stress experienced by employees was a result of the culture that had developed within the Council's management. It was added that some UNISON members had reported significant levels of stress and pressure from work. The Forum was advised that a Stress Strategy Group had been established to monitor the issue on a regular basis. A Member from UNISON welcomed the Forum's commitment to dealing with the issue and emphasised that health and safety should be a top priority for Members and officers.

A Member expressed concern that the issue had not been to Cabinet, given that it was a corporate matter that affected the culture of the Council. Following further discussion, it was suggested that a report on stress could be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 28 July 2005.

RESOLVED: That progress on the Action Plan be reported at each meeting of the Forum.

155. **Recruitment and Selection Practises:**

The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (Organisational Development), which provided details of the Council's recruitment and selection procedures. UNISON representatives expressed concern at the recruitment and selection practises carried out across the Council and stressed that such practises could have a negative impact on service delivery. The Forum's debate centred on the levels and reasons for temporary appointments and the number of agency workers employed and their impact on the Council's budget.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

156. **Investigation Requested by the Employees' Consultative Forum:**

Members received a confidential report of the Executive Director (Business Connections), following a request from the Forum at its previous meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Forum refer Recommendation 1 of the report to the Constitutional Review Working Group for consideration.

157. **Failure to act on Hazard Notice issued to Children & Families - Millmans Resource Centre:**

The Forum considered a confidential report in this matter from UNISON.

RESOLVED: That the Forum receive an information item reporting progress in the implementation of the action plan at a future meeting.

158. **Date of the Special Meeting of the Employees' Consultative Forum:**

RESOLVED: That a Special Meeting of the Forum to discuss the Middle Management Review be held on Thursday 21 July 2005 at 7.30pm.

159. **Extension to and Termination of the Meeting:**

In accordance with the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6.7 (Part 4F of the Constitution) it was

RESOLVED: At 10.00 pm to continue until 10.15 pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.55 pm, closed at 10.15 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARIE-LOUISE NOLAN
Chair