



# EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

**MONDAY 27 APRIL 2009  
7.30 PM**

**COMMITTEE ROOM 5,  
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

**[Pre Meetings: Council 7.00PM COMMITTEE ROOM 5]  
Employees' 6.30 PM COMMITTEE ROOM 3]**

**MEMBERSHIP** (Quorum: 3 from the Council Side and 3 from the Employees' Side of the permanent membership)

**Chair:** Ms L Ahmad

**Councillors:**

David Ashton  
Mrs Camilla Bath  
Susan Hall  
Paul Osborn (VC)

Bob Currie  
Graham Henson  
Phillip O'Dell

**Employee Representatives**

Representatives of HTCC: Ms L Snowdon (2 vacancies)

Representatives of UNISON: Ms M Cawley Mr G Martin  
Ms A Jackson Mr R Thomas

Representative of GMB: Mr J Dunbar

**Reserve Council Side Members:**

1. Joyce Nickolay  
2. Don Billson  
3. Julia Merison  
4. Tony Ferrari

1. B E Gate  
2. Keith Ferry  
3. Navin Shah

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,  
Legal and Governance Services Department**

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**HARROW COUNCIL**

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

**MONDAY 27 APRIL 2009**

**AGENDA - PART I**

1. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. **Declarations of Interest:**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Forum;
- (b) all other Members present in any part of the room or chamber.

3. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 2)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. **Petitions:**

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

5. **Deputations:**

To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

6. **Public Questions:**

To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

7. **UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services:** (Pages 3 - 6)  
Report from UNISON.

8. **Management Response to Unison Report:** (Pages 7 - 10)  
The management response to the UNISON report on Housing: Restructuring of Services.

9. **Exclusion of the Press and Public:**  
To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence, or of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
10.	Appendices to Management Response to Unison Report	Information under paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to any individual.

## **AGENDA - PART II**

10. **Appendices to Management Response to Unison Report:** (Pages 11 - 88)  
The management response to the UNISON report on Housing: Restructuring of Services.

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**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

**1 APRIL 2009**

- Chairman: \* Ms L Ahmad
- Councillors: \* David Ashton \* Graham Henson  
 \* Mrs Camilla Bath \* Phillip O'Dell  
 \* Bob Currie \* Paul Osborn  
 \* Susan Hall
- Representatives of HTCC: Ms L Snowdon
- Representatives of UNISON: \* Ms M Cawley \* Mr G Martin  
 \* Ms A Jackson \* Mr R Thomas
- Representative of GMB: \* Mr J Dunbar

\* Denotes Member present/Employee Representative present

Also in attendance: Stella George-Duesbury – GMB  
 Kathleen MsDonald – GMB

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**

**PART II - MINUTES**

147. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

148. **Declarations of Interest:**

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

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
7. UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring Services of ) ) )	Councillor David Ashton	Personal interest in that his daughter-in-law was a Council employee. Accordingly, he would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision-making on this item
	Councillor Bob Currie	Personal interest in that he was a retired member of UNISON and his son was a Council employee. Accordingly, he would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision-making on this item
	Councillor Graham Henson	Personal interest in that he was a member of the Communication Workers' Union and his cousin was a Council employee. Accordingly, he would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision-making on this item

149. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2009, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

150. **Petitions, Deputations and Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rules 16, 14 and 15 respectively (Part 4E of the Constitution).

151. **UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services:**

The Forum noted that, in addition to a report from UNISON on the Restructuring of Housing Services which had been circulated on the main agenda, a number of documents had been circulated on a supplemental agenda or tabled at the meeting, which the Forum were requested to admit late to the agenda.

The Forum considered that, in order to enable full consideration of all the paperwork now before them, a Special meeting be arranged. It was agreed that the arrangements for the Special meeting would include:

- the current Chairman in the Chair;
- the tabled amendment by UNISON being incorporated into the employee side report;
- observers from the Employee Side attending the meeting subject to clarification on the legal requirements regarding confidential information, that is the details of individual officers would not be discussed in their presence. 10 observers were specified and agreed to attend the meeting;
- a GMB representative in attendance at the scheduled meeting, who may have left the Council's employment prior to the date agreed for the Special meeting, being authorised to attend and speak at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That a Special meeting of the Forum be arranged.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.00 pm)

(Signed) MS L AHMAD  
Chairman

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date: 27 April 2009

**EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON Housing: Restructuring of Services  
SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED**

**Consultation process was flawed:**  
**Unison wishes to raise major concerns regarding the lack of commitment to the values and obligations within the Policy for organisational change which underpins this Councils pledge of partnership working.**  
**This Union requests that the Portfolio holder undertake to remind officers that they are required to consult and provide adequate comments and documentation (Recognition and Procedural Agreement 5.6); and that they have a greater responsibility to communicate effectively with the staff' and staff side to ensure that the 'Create Values' are disseminated to all.**

**CHRONOLOGY**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
1.12.08	Issue raised informally by Branch Secretary with Service Manager	No response from Manager
11,12.08	Meeting between management and unions	Matter unresolved
19.01.09	Meeting with staff and unions	Requests for documentation by this union still outstanding; Matter referred to AHJC
30.01.09	Meeting with Paul Najsarek Corporate Director and Unison	Unison raised their concerns and tabled counter proposal
9.02.09	Adults and Housing Joint Committee	No resolution was found – matter referred to ECF
	This is not an exhaustive list of meetings and letters that have been held to resolve this matter	

**REPORT**

It was acknowledged in a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008; that 'restructure always presents an uncertain time for staff'; yet apologies were tabled by Ms Gwyneth Allen at the very first meeting with staff for the inappropriate and insensitive way that employees were informed of the proposed

deletion of posts. The letter also stated that 'whilst I do not want to alarm staff unnecessarily, it is vital that staff and unions are aware of these proposals'; this assurance has proven not to be the case in practice.

**Consultation process was flawed:**

Unison wishes to raise major concerns regarding the lack of commitment to the values and obligations within the Policy for organisational change which underpins this Council's pledge of partnership working. The original documentation provided on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 for Consultation was inaccurate; and the information was distributed to all employees prior to informing those in the posts at risk of deletion.

**Failure to respond to reasonable requests for information/documentation:**

Unison has frequently, repeatedly and reasonably requested that all the documentation could be provided. This union questioned the decision by the management of this service not to conduct even basic feasibility studies; the reluctance to provide any relevant evidence to substantiate the deletion of posts and the reallocation of residual tasks to remaining employees as identified in the consultation document was derelict and ill considered.

This failure to provide all the relevant documentation and attributed costs from the first restructure (which failed to meet the required outcome).

Unison has requested this vital documentation in order to base a balanced and objective response to the proposal, has placed an impediment to constructive and meaningful consultation.

Unison is committed to working with all parts of this Council to provide an effective value for money service delivery, to protect its member's jobs, which in turn provides consistency of service and maintains familiarity and trust to the residents of Harrow. It is with regret that our endeavours in this regard have been frustrated by the failure of the Housing department senior management team to engage in meaningful debate, effective communication and provision of valuable information which would achieve a collective input by all stakeholders.

**AUTHOR: Harrow UNISON Branch Secretary Gary Martin**

**CONTACT DETAILS 020 8424 1795**



**Date 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.**

**The amendments to the UNISON'S ECF resolutions are as follows:-**

1. That all outstanding information requested by UNISON in the consultation process be supplied within a reasonable time frame (five working days)
2. That the consultation process is revisited, as it is in breach of the protocol for the managing organisational change 1.1 and also the recognition and procedural agreement section 15.

Unison wishes these amendments to be adopted and agreed by the members of the forum.

**Harrow UNISON Local Government Branch.**

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<b>Meeting:</b>	Employee Consultative Forum
<b>Date:</b>	27 April 2009
<b>Subject:</b>	Housing Services Response to Unison Concerns on HaRP Restructure
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Gwyneth Allen, Divisional Director, Housing Service
<b>Exempt:</b>	No (except for Part II Appendices by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that they contain information relating to any individual.
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1 – Minutes of Housing Joint Committee meetings  Appendix 2 – Report of 1 December 2008 provided to all staff and Unions  Appendix 3 – Management response to Unions 16 1 2009  Appendix 4 – Issues Log  Appendix 5 – Consultation Timetable  Appendix 6 - AHJC Information up date 23.02.09

## Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the actions taken in relation to restructuring within Housing Services necessary as a result of the introduction of the Civica IT system and addresses the concerns raised by Unison regarding compliance with the protocol for managing organisational change.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **2.1 Background**

Unison has suggested that the consultation process undertaken by the Housing Service in order to achieve the savings set out in the business case relating to the introduction of an electronic document retrieval and management system (EDRMS) known as Civica was not in accordance with the protocol for managing organisational change.

### **2.2 Response to Unison concerns**

#### **2.2.1 Consultation Process for HaRP Restructure**

Consultation for the HaRP restructure has been carried out in accordance with the protocol for managing organisational change section 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

The wider consultation with Trade Unions for the introduction of the HaRP programme was carried out through the HaRP Partnership Meetings run by Capita from January 2008. Updates from the Partnership meetings were fed into the Housing Joint Committee meetings from 15 June 2007 to 9 March 2009 (Appendix 1). The minutes of the HGJC meetings attached at appendix 1 provide evidence that the Housing Service sought to update and provide early information relating to the possible implications of the introduction of HaRP in Housing.

It was not possible, at this stage, to consult on the detail of any proposed changes to the structure as the impact on the service would be realised after the 'system go live' in October 2008.

On 1 December 2008, when firm proposals were developed, the formal consultation commenced with managers meeting with Unison and GMB trade unions to inform them of the detailed proposals and for the process of consulting with regard to the proposed re-structuring. A meeting also took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 with all Housing staff. The report provided as Appendix 2 was circulated to all staff and to Trade Union colleagues..

Throughout the consultation process, a number of meetings have been held with both trade unions and staff and an issues log was created with in out from GMB and Unison and all issues on the log have been responded to. (Appendix 3) In addition both trade unions have received written responses to their counter proposals (Appendix 5)

Managers of affected service areas have also met with staff on 1 to 1 basis, in team meetings and in a wider forum as indicated in the consultation timetable (Appendix 4).

#### **2.2.2 Unison Suggestion that “Consultation process was flawed”.**

The minutes of the Housing Group Joint Committee detailed at Appendix 1 demonstrate the commitment of senior management within the Housing Service to work in partnership with Union colleagues by arranging meetings

regularly, providing updates from the HaRP partnership meeting and advance notification of the likely action that would be necessary following the introduction of the Civica IT system through the HARP project.

It was clear from the outset of HaRP and the implementation stage of the HaRP system in Housing, that the process of staff consultation would be meaningful towards the later part of 2008 when the system had been tested and installed. The implementation timetable started in February 2008 with system “go live” in October 2008. The exercise of identifying, for consultation, specific changes necessary within the service to achieve both the savings required and assess the areas where there would be a requirement for an increase in resource, could only be commenced after processes had been mapped, tested and staff trained for the system to go live in October 2008.

A detailed report was produced on 1 December 2008 and provided to all members of staff working in the housing service and to union colleagues. The report is attached as appendix 2 and sets out the rationale for the posts that were identified for deletion. The attachments to that report included a structure chart of the position as at 1 December 2008 and that proposed following the re-structure. The ‘as is’ structure chart was condensed on to one table for staff benefit. One error was identified during the first staff meeting and the table was re-issued immediately. All staff were notified of the possible deletion of their posts prior to the staff meeting taking place on 1 December 2008.

### **2.2.3 Unison suggestion that the Housing Service “failed to respond to reasonable requests for information/documentation”.**

The appendices attached to this report are the formal reports that have been provided to Union colleagues and to the staff within the housing service. In addition, as demonstrated by the issues log, information requested by Union colleagues has also been provided. The reports document the rationale and feasibility relating to the proposals to delete specific posts within the service.

Unison has made reference to a re-structure within resident services that was concluded on 1 April 2008. This re-structure was consulted on and concluded before commencement of the process of evaluating the changes brought about by the HaRP implementation. Those changes were necessary to improve the performance of the Housing Service specifically within the managing Council houses block of performance indicators for CPA purposes and to provide an improved quality service to tenants and leaseholders. The changes introduced in April 2008 are essential to ensuring an improved housing management service to tenants and leaseholders. The re-structuring introduced management capacity into resident services at a time when Civica was also introduced to improve basic record keeping and filing.

### **2.2.4 Current Position**

The restructure was signed off to be implemented by the Director of Adults and Housing on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

The outcome of the HaRP restructure is that out of the 5 employees at risk, 3 employees have applied for voluntary severance and their applications have proceeded to stage 7 under that process. 1 member of staff has been offered

and accepted an alternative role within the Housing service and 1 member of staff will proceed through the redundancy process.

### **3. Conclusion**

The Housing service is very committed to working in partnership with colleagues of both trade unions and to ensuring that early notification of the possibility for change is discussed on a confidential basis in advance of formal processes to deliver change. The demands of the service to improve and to meet customer satisfaction require constant change. Housing managers recognise and have complied with all aspects of the protocol for managing organisational change and the Trade Union Recognition and Procedural Agreement.

In addition Managers of the Housing Service fully recognise the difficulty for those staff whose role is affected by the proposals and have worked to minimise the effect on permanent posts. The role profiles of those staff who are working in teams where posts have been deleted have been reviewed and capacity to deliver the service required has been retained.

Gwyneth Allen  
Divisional Director of Housing Services  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2009

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