



# EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

**THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2009  
7.30 PM**

**COMMITTEE ROOM 6,  
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

**[Pre Meetings: Council 7.00 PM CTTEE RM 1 & 2]  
Employees' 6.30 PM CTTE RM 3]**

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

**Chair:** Councillor Paul Osborn

**Councillors:**

**David Ashton  
Mrs Camilla Bath  
Susan Hall**

**Bob Currie  
Graham Henson  
Phillip O'Dell**

**Employee Representatives**

Representatives of HTCC: Ms L Snowdon (2 vacancies)

Representatives of UNISON: Ms L Ahmad Mr G Martin  
Ms M Cawley Mr R Thomas  
Ms A Jackson (Vacancy)

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**

**THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**AGENDA - PART I**

1. **Appointment of Chairman:**

To note the appointment at the Cabinet meeting held on 14 May 2009 of Councillor Paul Osborn as Chairman of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

Enc 5. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 6)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

6. **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).

7. **Deputations:**

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

8. **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).

Enc 9. **Annual Health and Safety Report:** (Pages 7 - 22)  
To receive a report of the Corporate Director of Finance.

10. **Peer Group Review:**  
To receive a verbal update.

Enc 11. **Feasibility Studies and Peer Review:** (Pages 23 - 24)  
To receive a report from UNISON.

**AGENDA - PART II - NIL**

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**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

**27 APRIL 2009**

- Chairman: \* Ms L Ahmad
- Councillors: \* David Ashton \* Graham Henson  
 \* Mrs Camilla Bath \* Julia Merison (3)  
 \* Bob Currie \* Phillip O'Dell  
 \* Tony Ferrari (4)
- 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  
 (3) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Member

Also in attendance:

Steve Compton (UNISON)  
 Stella George-Duesbury (GMB)  
 Kathleen McDonald (GMB)

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION 1 - UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services and Housing Services Response to UNISON Report**

The Forum considered a report from UNISON which expressed their concern regarding the consultation process in relation to the restructuring of Housing Services. The concern related to the process.

UNISON's concerns related to two main issues:

- The consultation process was flawed and, in particular, the original documentation provided on Monday 1 December 2008 for consultation was inaccurate. In addition, the information had been distributed to all employees, prior to informing those in the posts at risk of deletion.
- There had been a failure by management to respond to reasonable requests for information and documentation. The Union questioned the decision by the management of the service not to conduct basic feasibility studies, the reluctance to provide any relevant evidence to substantiate the deletion of posts, and the reallocation of residual tasks to the remaining employees, as identified in the consultation document.

The Union indicated that it was requesting the following action:

- That all outstanding information requested by UNISON during the consultation process be supplied within a reasonable time frame (five working days); and
- that the consultation process be revisited as it was in breach of 1.1 of the Protocol for the Managing Organisational Change policy and also the Recognition and Procedural Agreement section 15.

The Forum also received a response from Housing Services to UNISON's concerns in relation to the HaRP restructure together with some appendices, the confidential element of which was not discussed at the meeting. The report set out the actions taken in relation to restructuring in Housing Services arising from the introduction of the Civica IT system, and addressed the concerns raised by UNISON regarding compliance with the protocol for managing organisational change. Appendices to the report contained some of the the minutes of Housing Joint Committee meetings that referred to the HaRP restructuring, the report of 1 December 2008 provided to all staff and unions, the management response to the Unions dated 16 January 2009, the Issues Log, the Consultation Timetable, and Adult and Housing Joint Committee information up to 23 February 2009.

The Employees' Side raised the following points.

- During discussion of this item, the Employee Representatives stated that, in their view, issues had arisen at the start of the consultation process on 1 December 2008 and that requests for information had been made subsequent to that meeting. The information before the Members did not include minutes of the Housing Group Joint Committees on 22 May and 17 July 2008, although there was mention of the content of these at subsequent meetings despite union members not being in attendance. The minutes of a meeting held on 19 June 2008 referred to the need for a review of the staff structure, however union representatives had not been in attendance. A number of the minutes stated that UNISON did not attend, but they had not been invited. UNISON indicated that the first point of contact should have been the Branch Administrator. It was a request from a Branch Officer that had resulted in UNISON being invited. Information was sought as to the quorum and terms of reference of the Housing Joint Committee.
- Concern was expressed that the minute documentation circulated indicated that a response from management was still awaited on some issues, for example in the minutes of 9 March 2009. Those minutes also referred to a request to the union not to 'stir up' the caretakers. This was in breach of the Honourable Recognition Agreement.
- The union had raised issues regarding the proposals with: Housing Services, the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing, the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety, and the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing but no response had been received.
- Emails referred to in the minutes were not included within the documentation provided to the Forum.
- At the meeting of the Housing Joint Committee on 23 October 2008 it had been minuted that a request had been made for the cost of consultation with residents, how statements were made, and an action plan for the improvement and strategic plan for the delivery of caretaking services. This information had not been received. The minutes of 25 September 2008 stated that the caretaking service was expensive compared to that of other boroughs and did not meet the needs of residents.
- The actions arising from the meeting on 13 January 2009 stated that officers would provide details of how work from deleted posts would be distributed to existing posts by 16 January 2009, and role profiles of posts affected.
- The unions were of the view that the information given in Appendix 3 was the rationale behind the proposals and was not a feasibility study as requested.
- The caretaking restructure from three teams to two should have been processed as an organisational change, as it had an impact on the contracts of staff and increased supervisory responsibility to in excess of six posts from three and a half. A post was subsequently deleted. Had the team leader post, included in the consultation papers on 1 December 2008, been evaluated? Information had been requested on the Health and Safety risks with regard to diseases.
- Estate Supervisors had been re-graded due to re-evaluation although there were only two of them.
- The minutes of 24 January 2008 gave an indication that workloads would reduce and more opportunities would be available, not that roles would be deleted.
- The Adult and Housing Joint Committee information update stated that the role profiles of Resident Wardens were in the process of evaluation. However, notification had not been received by the unions or postholders even though the minutes of 9 March 2009 had noted the request for information
- A formal complaint had been made to the Chief Executive that the arrangements for the meeting on 1 December 2008 were not in accordance with the Protocol for Organisational Change. This stated that on every occasion, unions should be given the documentation well in advance of the meeting or staff being informed so that errors could be notified and rectified

prior to circulation to staff. On this occasion, the documentation was circulated on the day of the meeting and contained inaccurate information, and those employees whose posts were liable for deletion were advised by email just prior to the meeting. The complaint had been referred to the Divisional Director of Human Resources and Development who had responded that advance notice should have been given but that circumstances had prevented this. A request by the unions to rearrange the meeting had not been agreed. It would have been beneficial to delay the meeting by a week to ensure that staff were correctly informed. The two branch officials involved had not known of the meeting until the day as they had been on a training course and had then requested a pre-meeting with the unions prior to the staff meeting.

- Jobs should be the ones affected by a document management system. Jobs that HaRP had no impact on had been included in the proposals but there was no clarification as to why.
- The unions had lost members due to the perception of their ability to represent them and their inability to know the facts.
- Responsibility and accountability for the issue was considered to be important.

Officers raised the following points:

- The Housing Joint Committee meetings minutes contained in Appendix 1 showed the extent to which the Housing Service had alerted the unions to the significant changes that would occur. Only minutes that referred to restructuring had been included. The unions had been invited to the meetings and had received draft agendas to enable them to contribute to agenda items. The minutes of 24 January 2008 had stated that there would be changes to the way staff worked as a result of the investment in IT. Officers did not have the information at the meeting regarding the quorum and terms of reference of the Housing Group Joint Committee.
- Discussions had taken place over a number of months. Officers were not aware of any outstanding information requested by the unions. The feasibility studies regarding the ten posts to be deleted from the structure had been the subject of continual dialogue with staff and union representatives. The feasibility studies in relation to the five filled posts were set out in detail in the report of 16 January 2009. The management response to the unions on the proposed restructure, attached at Appendix 3 to the report, detailed the reasons for change and the case for the deletion of posts.
- The information before the Members included the feasibility exercise. The information pack fulfilled the requirement for a sound consultation process in relation to the staff reduction exercise. Minor drafting errors in the paperwork for the meeting on 1 December 2008 had been corrected and reissued within two days. An issues log had been provided and officers had sought to work with the unions to the benefit of staff. A reduction in costs of £300,000 for 2009/10 was required due to the investment in IT systems. A member of GMB had been released from other duties one day a week to facilitate working together. The officers provided a service to tenants and leaseholders and should work to provide a high quality service. Within the Housing Service, the homelessness function had performed to a high standard whilst resident services had not been seen as successful.
- The purpose of the caretaking reorganisation had been to cover sickness absence and therefore was not seen as a formal restructure. Re-evaluations of posts had therefore not taken place. As it was not known how long the employee would be on sick leave, it would be an ongoing situation. An additional cleaning team had been employed from 1 July 2008 due to the condition of internal common ways in blocks of flats. The issue of Health and Safety with regard to diseases had not been addressed in the documentation as it had not been raised specifically in relation to HaRP.
- With regard to Estate Supervisors, the evaluation process had been ongoing for a number of years. The re-evaluation of the Resident Warden posts would be taken forward in conjunction with the Sheltered Housing Review and there would be a report back on this issue.
- Errors in the documentation for the meeting on 1 December 2008 had been identified by Managers at the start of the meeting with staff and the report was

subsequently reissued with amendments. As this documentation had already been circulated to staff it had seemed reasonable for management to talk to the staff regarding the proposals. A pre-meeting with the unions had been planned and had taken place on 1 December 2008.

Having considered the issues raised Members had a detailed discussion.

In relation to a Member's question as to the response of the Chief Executive to the formal complaint by the unions, the unions advised that he had agreed that the implementation could have been managed better but that he had asked them to 'bear with it'.

Members noted that a delay of five to seven working days had been requested by the unions to the consultation meeting held on 1 December 2008. The officers stated that, as the documentation had been presented to all staff and the meeting was an hour later, the officers considered that if staff were not given the opportunity to gain an explanation of the proposals from the managers on that day, there would have been concern from employees. On balance, it had been considered important that staff could question managers rather than speculate on the proposals for a week.

Members expressed concern at the number of apparent contradictions which made it difficult to gain a clear understanding of what had occurred. It was suggested that, in future, it would be useful to make use of the action columns for Joint Committee minutes by either declaring that there were no actions or detailing action to be carried forward. These could then be noted as actioned or carried forward when the minutes were agreed.

A Member sought clarification as to the statement attributed to him at the meeting on 9 March 2009. It was undertaken that this would be addressed if and when a further meeting of the Joint Committee was held.

Members discussed the requests put forward by the union. The request by the Employees Side for outstanding information was supported, however the second request could result in a delay. Members were anxious that the Council should learn from the exercise and recognised that what had happened could not be undone. The negotiations had reached a conclusion and the disquiet expressed by the unions was understood, but the value of beginning the consultation again was uncertain. Members considered that a review of the consultation process that had taken place would be of more value and would allow any lessons to be learnt to be identified. It was important that there should be a clear understanding of what information had been requested and was still outstanding. Support was therefore given to the establishment of a Peer Review to take the matter forward. It was suggested that detailed discussion should take place between the officers and unions prior to any review meeting in order to resolve as many outstanding issues as possible. There should be a proper evaluation of what was proposed, with rigorous analysis and discussion with the unions to ensure that the proposals were feasible.

The officers advised that, as three of the postholders affected had left the Council's service under voluntary severance, one was due to leave shortly under redundancy and one had been appointed to a vacant post, it was impossible to go back to the beginning of the exercise.

It was agreed that Members receive the constitution of each of the bodies involved in the consultation process. It was also requested that Members be apprised should any difficulty arise from either side.

The officer suggested that the Housing Group Joint Committee should be reinstated to meet monthly.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to the Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services)

That (1) a Peer Review be established to review the process and identify any lessons to be learnt from the Housing Services Restructuring, to agree any outstanding information requirements, and to consider the impact on the service in the context of the service improvement agenda; and

(2) a report back be submitted to the next meeting of the Employees' Consultative Forum.



**[Reason for Recommendation:.** In order to take forward the consultation regarding the Housing Services Restructuring.]

(See also Minutes 153 and 156).

**PART II - MINUTES**

152. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

| <u>Ordinary Member</u>                          | <u>Reserve Member</u>                               |
|---|---|
| Councillor Paul Osborn<br>Councillor Susan Hall | Councillor Tony Ferrari<br>Councillor Julia Merison |

153. **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 of Services | 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.  |
| 8. Management Response to UNISON Report                | 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. |

154. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment of Minute 151 to remove all references to a Special meeting and to replace this in all instances with reference to a reconvened meeting.

155. **Petitions:**

**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).

156. **UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services and Housing Services Response to Unison concerns on HaRP Restructure:**  
(See Recommendation 1).

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.55 pm)

(Signed) MS L AHMAD  
Chairman

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|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Meeting:             | Employees Consultative Forum   |
| Date:                | 3rd September 2009   |
| Subject:             | Health and Safety Annual Report 2008/9   |
| Key Decision:        | No   |
| Responsible Officer: | Myfanwy Barrett, Corporate Director of Finance                                       |
| Portfolio Holder:    | David Ashton, Council Leader, Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance |
| Exempt:              | No.  |
| Enclosures:          | Appendix: <i>Health and Safety Report 08/09</i>                                      |

## Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

### Summary

This report outlines the health and safety work done during 08/09, provides information on performance measures including training data, audits and accidents and looks ahead to the work planned to support the council in its change agenda and in response to new legislation

### Recommendations:

ECF is requested to note the report of performance and work carried out during 2008/09

### Reason: (For recommendation)

To provide the ECF with information on Health and Safety performance across the organisation.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Options considered**

This report is for monitoring purposes

#### **2.1 Executive Summary**

The main activities during the year were as follows:

- Further development of the corporate health and safety scorecard as part of improvement boards.
- Continuing development of health and safety codes of practice to meet identified needs.
- Continuing audits of development and implementation of Health and Safety Plans.
- Continued support for the managers and employees induction training programmes.
- Support and development of the Health at Work Group.
- Continued development of Education Health and Safety Forum.
- Visits by the HSE and Fire Brigade.
- Positive feedback from the HSE on progress and in particular on our approach to asbestos and legionella management.

.A more joined up approach to managing our risks in conjunction with other teams within Audit and Risk.

#### **2.2 Background**

It is known from research that successful organisations manage their business well including the threats to their success.

It is also known that accidents and ill health, the most visible effect of which is absence from work, put huge pressures and resource costs on organisations.

They hamper organisational success and prevent organisations fulfilling their mission to their customers and stakeholders.

The government set itself business targets to reduce accidents and ill health caused by work. Central to delivery of those is the role of public bodies as major employers and procurers of goods and services to be exemplars of good practice for their local communities including businesses.

## **2.3 Equalities impact**

The equality impact of health and safety continues to be part of the monitoring carried out in planning and delivering the service. For example equality data in all training attended and the use of accessible venues is well established. Alternative formats for delivery of messages are used and locally based delivery of training and occupational Health Services has enable us to include hard to reach groups including part time workers.

## **2.4 Legal comments**

None

## **2.5 Community safety**

The content of the report and recommendations address the need for partner agencies to work together to develop and implement strategies to minimise the impact of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour on our staff, contractor's etc particularly more vulnerable staff e.g. lone workers. The report also provides evidence of the costs of accidents, including a disproportionate number of violence and aggression cases.

The report makes direct recommendations relating to partnership working arrangements and activities that should be co-ordinated across agencies and implementation of these recommendation will serve to underpin the delivery of crime reduction strategy priorities, specifically the violent crime, assaults and ASB priorities and as such directly support section 17 key objectives.

## **2.6 Financial Implications**

There are no growth items in the proposed plans for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. All items should be contained within the existing budgets.

## **2.7 Performance Issues**

Health and safety performance has the potential to impact on the council meeting is strategic and operational objectives. Health and safety performance is captured in the Corporate Health and Safety Scorecard which is derived from scorecards at a Directorate level. The scorecard measures a blend of operational and management performance and is scrutinised through improvement boards on a quarterly basis. Performance is managed through a proactive process of engagement, attendance levels at training courses etc. rather than on the basis of incidents, which are the ultimate outcome measure.

## **2.8 Risk Management Implications**

Management of Health and safety risk is central to this report and contributes to the overall management of risk across the council's operations.

## 2.9 Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact arising from this report.

## Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

|                          |                                     |   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name: ...Myfanwy Barrett | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the<br>Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: 07.06.09           |                                     |   |
| Name: Elaine Mceachron   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the<br>Monitoring Officer      |
| Date: 12.06.09           |                                     |   |

## Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

|                     |                                     |   |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name: Alex Dewsnap  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Divisional Director (Strategy<br>& Improvement) |
| Date: 12.06.09..... |                                     |   |

## Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

|                       |                                     |   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Name: ...John Edwards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Divisional Director<br>(Environmental Services) |
| Date: .....16.06.09   |                                     |   |

## Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Paul Williams  
Service Manager  
Harrow Health and Safety Services  
Tel 020 8424 1362

Background Papers:

Health and Safety Annual Report 01.04.08 – 31.03.09

Harrow Council

Health and Safety Annual Report

2008-2009

## 1. Background

1.1 The council has historically issued an annual report outlining its corporate performance. It does so as a matter of good practice to understand and prioritise areas of health and safety risk and make recommendations to meet its statutory obligations.

## 2. New HSE Strategy

2.1 The HSE has issued a revised strategy “The Health and Safety of Great Britain \\\ be part of the solution”. It is important that we consider the new strategy when deciding our future priorities for health and safety direction for the years ahead.

2.2 This new strategy will influence the way we work in future and in particular the measures we take to manage health and safety risks. The strategy outlines key areas where organisations should concentrate. For local authorities there are a number of activities to develop from the themes outlined in the new HSE strategy as follows:

- The need for strong leadership;
- building competence;
- involving the workforce;
- creating healthier, safer workplaces;
- customising support for SMEs;
- avoiding catastrophe; and
- taking a wider perspective

2.3 Health and safety leadership must start at the top. Whatever the nature of the organisation, whether in the public, private or not for profit sector, members of the board have both collective and individual responsibility for health and safety.

2.4 What matters is that there is a proper focus on both the risks that occur most often and those with serious consequences. Competence is the ability to profile the risks in operational activities and then apply the right measures to control and manage those risks.

2.5 Workplace research provides strong evidence to suggest that involving workers has a positive effect on health and safety performance. In practice this means that worker involvement improves health and safety and staff are safer and healthier as a result.

2.6 The starting point to embrace the new strategy is to create a risk profile identifying which groups of workers are most at risk and the scale and incidence of injuries or cases of ill health. This sets the priorities for health and safety improvement, which then enables resources and expertise to be more accurately targeted to deliver those improvements.

2.7 Health and safety does not and cannot exist in a vacuum. It is not a discrete entity and so health and safety priorities cannot be delivered in isolation from other issues that impact on or overlap with them.

2.8 In summary, the goals for the health and safety of Great Britain are:

- To reduce the number of work related injuries and cases of ill health;



- To gain widespread commitment and recognition of what real health and safety is about;
- To motivate all those in the health and safety system as to how they can contribute to an improved health and safety performance;
- To ensure that those who fail in their health and safety duties are held to account.

2.9 The process of health and safety improvement began in 1974 and continued unabated until around 2003. Since then it has stalled. From now on, if we all work together with a clear vision and purpose we can recommence improvement and bring about a change for the better.

2.10 Some of the most important themes for Harrow arising from this new strategy include removing bureaucracy, focusing on significant risk and making trades union representatives an active part of improving performance. Ultimately, health and safety is integral to the wider agenda aimed at protecting people from harm and thereby benefitting not just the individual but society as a whole

### **3. Management System and HSE visit.**

3.1 As part of the drive for improved health and safety standards in the public sector the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the council's Enforcing Authority, carried out a management inspection in 2005 and periodic interim visits to test progress on our post inspection action plan.

3.2 The key strand of the Post inspection Action Plan has been the embedding of a health and safety management system based on health and safety plans across all council functions.

3.3 The plans are backed by a programme of work delivered by the Health and Safety Service and the Health and Safety Partnership Board (HSPB) whose task is to champion and challenge health and safety performance in the organisation. In addition the use of a corporate scorecard had enhanced the assessment of health and safety performance, driving forward health and safety improvements. It gives an abbreviated measure of health and safety progress across Directorates. The measures are fundamental to strategic management assurance based as they are on criteria associated with good health and safety performance

3.4 The last visit from HSE was in February 2009. The inspector reviewed the council's health and safety management in three key areas – management of stress at work, management of legionella and management of asbestos. 3.5 provides' a summary of the inspector's feedback from the visit in Feb 2009.

3.5 Feedback from the HSE led by Michael La Rose H M Inspector of Health and Safety is as follows: *Note: changes have been made to the spelling and grammar from the original*

*LB Harrow has a new partnership arrangement with Kier for housing and corporate repairs. Kier are also involved with the "Building Schools for the Future" programme in Harrow. HSE Construction is aware of this arrangement. LB Harrow is currently in the process of rebuilding and refurbishing 10 high schools with Kier for use in 2010. LB Harrow has initiated new delegation and responsibility down its management chain for finance and H&S. This includes delegated responsibilities for Asbestos and Legionella.*

*Asbestos management; a high proportion of properties have line drawing plans for asbestos location. Few properties have CAD plans. Kier carry out type 3 surveys on school buildings where construction work is planned. Results of surveys passed on to H&S team and to person delegated for asbestos. LB Harrow do random sampling of Type 3 surveys. There is joint training for Kier/LB Harrow employees with ARCA. This training awarded special recognition. Kier monitor asbestos removal contractors.*

*Evidence of mistrust and breakdown in communication between management and unions over long running asbestos issues has been raised in consultative forums. TU side have little faith in effectiveness of partnership board in dealing with asbestos complaints. CLASP schools appear to be under good management awaiting confirmation details from the 3 other schools.*

*Legionella Management; All cyclical maintenance contracts are managed by Kier. Legionella management is still run by LB Harrow and Legionella control officers. Advised of monthly temperature monitoring, shower head descaling, and quarterly inspection of all corporate premises. Depending on value of work a varied percentage of post inspections carried out by LB Harrow engineers for quality assurance. Legionella management to be considered at design stage in planned construction projects Management procedures embedded.*

*New Well being plan in place January 2009. Well Being driven by new Chief Executive and consultation and plan welcomed by TU side. Flexible Staff Benefits introduces new use of leave, flexible working and remote working. CREATE values initiative lead by chief executive in consultation with staff produce quarterly forums. Directorates carry out initiatives on Stress eg work carried out for Call Centre staff. Benchmarking required triggering the requirement for a Stress RA for consistency reasons. This was agreed awaiting arrangements from LB Harrow. TU side challenge the idea managers aware of stress management or have received stress management training. Resolvable problems in trust and communication between TU side and management an obstacle to a smooth and effective H&S management system.*

3.6 In general terms this inspection gave positive feedback regarding the work we are doing in these areas of risk. More work has been identified with respect to managing stress and improving relations with Trades Union colleagues.

3.7 A further development of action planning will be to tie in the HSE strategy to further action we want to instigate over the next three years. This will include restructure of the health and safety service to be more aligned to risks rather than directorate facing or providing functional services such as EVC (educational visits coordination) work or asbestos removals work approvals

## **4. Health and Safety Policy and Guidance**

4.1 In the previous year the Health and Safety Services reviewed a number of existing policies and procedures as well as introduced new ones which are listed below:

- Work adjustment Assessment Guidance
- Debriefing Guidance
- Handling money at Work Guidance
- Working safely with tablet PCs Guidance

## **5. Health and Safety Groups**

5.1 Health and Safety Groups are part of the council's strategy for gaining cooperation of employees for promoting and maintaining high standards of performance in health and safety. Group members are tasked with working collaboratively to raise the profile of health and safety across the council and beyond. The Health and Safety Partnership Board (HSPB), the strategic level group met once during 2008/9 and discussed the corporate scorecard and there was an update on the Corporate Manslaughter Act. It is envisaged that this group will meet at least quarterly during 09/10.

5.2 Directorate Safety Groups meet to consider issues local to them as well as any referrals from the HASPB and the HAWG. It has been a challenging year for them as staff changes continued across the council.

5.3 Meetings of the Educational Health and Safety Forum included talks and discussions on health and safety along with developmental initiatives. Health and safety is topical for schools given the range of refurbishment and new build projects currently being undertaken.

## **6 Health and Safety Service Visits Inspections and Audits**

6.1 Audits and inspections are the means by which we proactively assess health and safety performance. It supports the roll out of the health and safety management system based on health and safety plans. Visits took place to carry out planned inspections audits and site-specific training courses and workshops as well as to respond to requests for advice and intervention.

## **7. Health and Safety Training Programme**

7.1 Ongoing delivery of health and safety training is a steady area of work for the Health and Safety Service. Health and Safety Induction for managers and staff is a compulsory training course. Health and well being has also been integrated into the compulsory corporate induction courses for new managers and other staff.

7.2 Health and Safety Services have further developed a training matrix to help managers identify the training required for different staff in different areas of work and provided tailored training to support this. In addition to the regular training programme, the following new courses were specifically developed and delivered during the year:-

- Health and Safety for Premises Managers
- Stress and well being training for managers and teams
- Evacuation chair training for operatives and escorts
- Health and Safety for Youth Service Volunteers
- Working with hazardous substances for Street Scene staff
- Training for drivers/ assistants on safety in reversing vehicles
- Coaching for staff to meet health and safety components of their profession qualification
- Training for Education Visits Coordinators

## **8. Educational Visits and Journeys**

8.1 In September 2007, Health and Safety Services took over scrutiny of visits undertaken by our schools and Children's Services. Educational visits and journeys are an integral part of learning for our young people widening their experience and view of the world they are part of. However, it can be an area of public concern and incidents nationally attract high profile sometime adverse reaction.

8.2 Our role is to help schools look critically at their practice to ensure that reasonable precautions are taken without detracting from the young people's enjoyment and experiences. We have a programme to update the training of all coordinators who have local oversight of these trips to ensure that they are planned and conducted well but importantly that any feedback about what worked and what did not is shared across the school and wider learning community. Part of our service review will be to look at the most appropriate place and approach for the continuation of this work.

## **9. Occupational Health**

9.1 In April 2007, the Health and Safety Service took over management of the Occupational Health Service contract. The opportunity was taken to review the service and to formalise a system of key performance indicators for the service.

9.2 A successful rollover of the contract to the year 2009/10 was achieved. During 09/10 the service will be providing access to physiotherapy services to proactively address musculoskeletal conditions which nationally account for a substantially proportion of ill health absence.

9.3 There will also be specific consultant access for managers to improve their skills in dealing with health at work and an ongoing update seminar programme is underway. Occupational Health information has been incorporated into staff and managers' health and safety training.

## **10. Promotion of Health, Safety and well being**

10.1 The Council with our Occupational Health provider, held a number of successful health at work events involving staff from across the council (and visitors to the civic centre). Staff signed up for health checks, relaxation therapies as well as seminars on health topics. Regular health visits are made to the Depot, targeting hard to reach groups.

10.2 The revised intranet has now included a separate access page for occupational health and the EAP.

## **11. Employee Assistance Programme**

11.1 In April 2007, the Health and Safety Service took over management of the Employee Assistance Programme contract. This is part of our benefit package that enables employees to get independent telephone advice and where indicated face to face counselling support for a range of problems. This supports employees in maintaining their mental, social and emotional wellbeing, contributing to general health and resilience of the workforce and ultimately of the organisation.

11.2 The programme provider has taken part in onsite health promotion planned for next year to raise staff's awareness of the benefits of the service and new intranet information has been made available to staff.

## 12. Accident Information

While the reporting of accident data is useful it should be noted that this is only one means to measure performance in managing health and safety issues and that in addition this data:

- Measures failure.
- Cannot indicate the likelihood of serious events.
- Is reactive rather than preventative.
- Does not show the up to date situation.
- Does not account for under reporting within the Council.

The tables show reported employee and non employee accidents/incidents, by directorate for the year which includes the total number of accidents/incidents. However it should be understood that the directorate structure has changed significantly over the last few years and the accident database is not sophisticated thus meaningful comparison between annual data sets is not practical.

The data comprises minor accidents as well as more serious accidents/incident required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

During 07/08 The Health and Safety Service carried out over 270 site visits some of which involved following up accident reports to offer advice and make recommendations.

### 12.1 Accident tables

**Table 1: Reported Employee Accidents by Directorate 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009**

| Directorate                 | Reported Employee Accidents 1/4/2008-31/3/2009 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Corporate Finance           | 7 (2)  |
| Legal & Governance Services | 3 (n/a)  |
| Chief Executives            | 3 (n/a)  |
| Strategy & Business Support | n/a (9)  |
| Children's' Services        | 186 (199)                                      |
| Adults & Housing            | 90 (96)  |
| Community & Environment     | 71 (117)                                       |
| Total reported              | 360 (423)                                      |

*\*Note: the total for the previous year is given in brackets*

**Table 2: Reported Employee RIDDOR Accidents by Directorate**

| Directorate                 | Reported Employee RIDDOR Accidents 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Corporate Finance           | 2 (0)  |
| Legal & Governance Services | 0 (n/a)  |
| Chief Executives            | 0 (n/a)  |
| Strategy & Business Support | n/a (1)  |
| Children's Services         | 15 (11)  |
| Adults & Housing            | 1 (3)  |
| Community & Environment     | 15 (10)  |
| Total reported              | 33 (25)  |

*\*Note: the total for the previous year is given in brackets*

**Table 3: Reported Employees Near-miss Incidents by Directorate**

| Directorate                 | Reported Employees Near-miss Incidents 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Corporate Finance           | 3 (1)  |
| Legal & Governance Services | 0  |
| Chief Executives            | 1  |
| Strategy & Business Support | n/a  |
| Children's Services         | 3 (32)   |
| Adults & Housing            | 21 (27)  |
| Community & Environment     | 14 (17)  |
| Total reported              | 42 (77)  |

*\*Note: the total for the previous year is given in brackets*

**Table 4: Non employee Accidents and RIDDOR reports by Directorate**

| Directorate                 | Non employee accidents 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009 | RIDDOR reports 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Finance           | 1(0)                                       | 0 (0)                              |
| Legal & Governance Services | 0 (n/a)                                    | 0 (n/a)                            |
| Chief Executives            | 2 (n/a)                                    | 0 (n/a)                            |
| Strategy & Business Support | n/a (4)                                    | n/a (0)                            |
| Children's Services         | 300 (324)                                  | 77 (180)                           |
| Adults & Housing            | 320 (197)                                  | 3 (26)                             |
| Community & Environment     | 11 (39)                                    | 0 (3)                              |
| Total reported              | 632 (556)                                  | 80 (208)                           |

*Note: the total for the previous year is given in brackets. Most of the events recorded for Children's Services are accounted for by accidents to children e.g. playground incidents. The more serious RIDDOR accidents are significantly lower than 07/08.*

**Table 5: Fires reported 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009**

| Directorate                 | Reported fires 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Finance           | 0                                  |
| Legal & Governance Services | 0                                  |
| Chief Executives            | 0                                  |
| Strategy & Business Support | n/a                                |
| Children's Services         | 1 (Harrow High) 1* (Milton House)  |

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Adults & Housing        | 0     |
| Community & Environment | 1**   |
| Total reported          | 3 (5) |

\* Fire alarm activation in Milton House (Toaster)

\*\*Small fire in plant pot outside building at the Central Depot

Note: the total for the previous year in give in brackets

**Table 6: Accident Incident Rate (AIR) for all RIDDOR injuries (per 1000 workers)**

|                                     | AIR<br>2004-2005 | AIR<br>2005-2006 | AIR<br>2006-2007 | AIR<br>2007-2008 | AIR<br>2008-2009            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Harrow Council                      | 7.5              | 5.2              | 4.1              | 3.3              | 4.2                         |
| National Public Administration Data | 13.82            | 13.43            | 10.6             | 10.9             | Not available till Nov 2009 |

*There is currently no process to collect benchmark accident data with other London Boroughs and previous attempts have found too much discrepancy between employee numbers, direct vs indirect labour and outsourced activities.*

*The Accident Incident Rate is a formula used to calculate the number of accidents events for an average population of workforce though does not reflect hours worked. The calculation is made using one of the HSE recognised formula and gives a representation of the number of accidents linked to numbers employed. These figures do not account for casual staff and it should be recognised that the HSE recognises there is significant under reporting in most industry sectors.*

## 12.2 Cause of employee accidents

The top 5 are the same as last year and in the same order, namely:

1. Violence and aggression
2. Slips, trips and falls
3. Struck by/against
4. Manual handling
5. Falls from heights

The majority of violence and aggression incidents are in schools with generally more minor scratching etc. Similar in care establishments. More verbal abuse is reported than physical violence.

## 12.3 Occupational Groups Reporting Accidents

The top 5 occupational groups reporting accidents mirrors last year, with teacher as expected the biggest occupational group reporting due to size. These are:

1. Teachers/TA
2. Escorts
3. Refuse collectors
4. Parking attendants

## 5. Day care centre officers

It is expected that the per head incident rate for parking attendants to be the highest. Important work was carried out during the year on violence and aggression to parking attendants with some useful findings and improved processes as a result.

## **13. Health and Safety Training data**

A range of health and safety training was delivered during the year both centrally and locally in Directorate. Training was also carried out involving contract partners and the voluntary sector organisations that work closely with us. As well as large group training, coaching and mentoring was employed to assist managers across the council in developing their health and safety competence. Table 7 provides a summary of the main courses held during the year.



**Table 7: The Main Health and Safety Training Courses Attendances 1/4/2008- 31/3/2009**

| <b>Directorates Courses /</b>            | <b>Corporate Finance</b> | <b>Strategy and Business Support</b> | <b>Children's Services</b> | <b>Adults and Housing</b> | <b>Environment and Community</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Health and Safety Induction for staff    | 12                       | 14                                   | 25                         | 40                        | 24                               | 115          |
| Health and Safety Induction for managers | 6                        | 3                                    | 20                         | 27                        | 4                                | 60           |
| Health and Safety Risk Assessment        | 0                        | 4                                    | 19                         | 31                        | 23                               | 77           |
| Health and Safety for Premises managers  | 0                        | 0                                    | 10                         | 2                         | 1                                | 13           |
| Stress Awareness/Wellbeing training      | 0                        | 0                                    | 1                          | 8                         | 1                                | 10           |
| Fire Marshals                            | 1                        | 0                                    | 12                         | 12                        | 1                                | 26           |
| Fire Risk Assessment                     | 0                        | 0                                    | 0                          | 5                         | 0                                | 5            |
| Lone working                             | 0                        | 0                                    | 10                         | 10                        | 1                                | 21           |
| Personal safety                          | 0                        | 0                                    | 2                          | 4                         | 5                                | 11           |
| DSE users                                | 3                        | 3                                    | 0                          | 33                        | 0                                | 39           |
| DSE assessors                            | 1                        | 1                                    | 11                         | 9                         | 10                               | 32           |
| Stress awareness/risk assessment         | 0                        | 6                                    | 2                          | 9                         | 2                                | 19           |
| COSHH update                             | 0                        | 0                                    | 1                          | 10                        | 3                                | 14           |
| Evac chair training                      | 4                        | 8                                    | 15                         | 0                         | 8                                | 35           |
| Educational Visits coordinators          | 0                        | 0                                    | 23                         | 0                         | 0                                | 23           |
| Manual Handling                          | 0                        | 1                                    | 8                          | 21                        | 26                               | 56           |
| <b>Totals</b>                            | <b>27</b>                | <b>40</b>                            | <b>159</b>                 | <b>221</b>                | <b>109</b>                       | <b>556</b>   |

## **14. Fire Safety**

The council has been unable to appoint a permanent fire advisor and it was agreed to build upon existing expertise supplemented by the use of external consultants as necessary. All the operational team members have now successfully completed the qualifying programme for institute of Fire Engineering Technicians. Fire audit work will be incorporated into plans for assurance work in the future.

## **15. Plans for 2009/2010**

- Complete the restructure of the health and safety service to reflect a more risk based approach to support the organisation and incorporate new HSE thinking. This will include reasserting the role of the Health and Safety Service in an advisory, assistance and assurance capacity.
- Develop a longer-term plan of work to support the council during the transformation process that will be introduced during 2010-11 to support corporate objectives.
- Continue to support all directorates on their service improvement plans, in particular the actions to address sickness absence and to improve employee well being.
- Identify a suite on line access and e-learning packages to support directorates' changing needs for current and self-directed resources.
- A review of the school visits programme will be undertaken and information shared to support any improvements indicated. The feasibility of providing an online application and approval process will be looked at.

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON: HOUSING: Feasibility Studies, Peer Review, Response to counter proposal.**

**SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED:**

UNISON requests that a formal response is received from management regarding all the issues raised by UNISON at the last ECF (27<sup>th</sup> April 2009). We requested all document to be provided and a verbal response from the Housing management team.

**CHRONOLOGY**

| <b>DATE</b> | <b>ACTION</b>                 | <b>OUTCOME</b>               |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 27/04/09    | ECF Item- Housing Restructure | No response from Management. |

**REPORT**

To date unison has not received any feasibility studies from the housing directorate, these studies UNISON believe to be a fundamental requirement when a serious reduction in frontline positions has occurred. The failure to provide these studies prior to restructuring, UNISON believes has had a direct impact on staff within this area. There has been no response from this directorate regarding UNISONS counterproposal (caretaking service), these still remain outstanding from the previous ECF meeting, where it was agreed that this documentation would be readily available to this UNION.

Unison has to date received no feedback regarding the agreed Peer Review, which was to be undertaken in the housing directorate. We therefore ask whether this is down to the recent departure of the Divisional Director. As you will appreciate the housing department have gone through yet another restructure, which was undertaken by the housing management team. UNISON believes that there must be some level of accountability for the implementation of this restructure. We questioned how this service would be delivered to the required standards, with the deletion of key frontline posts? All this without any studies on how this would be achieved will have a serious impact on users and staff that remain with this authority.

We would request that all ECF members would support our request for resolution and explanation of the outstanding issues.

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