

Resources Directorate

Mr G Martin
Branch Secretary
Harrow L.G. Branch
The Unison Office
Central Depot
Forward Drive
Harrow
Middx
HA3 8NT.

3 January 2014

Dear Gary

**Modernising Terms and Conditions of Employment Collective Agreement:
'Variations to this Agreement' (section 6) – one month notice to amend
'Redundancy Payments' (section 7.3.2)**

I refer to your letter of 2 January 2014 in response to mine of 23 December 2013 regarding Unison's request that the proposed changes to redundancy pay effective from 1 April 2014 and 1 April 2015 are suspended to allow for renegotiation of those elements of the collective agreement.

You refer to my letter as being factually inaccurate in the context of the two cases referred to in one Directorate (transposed in your letter – my understanding is that the first case was at risk and left the Council; the second case requested redundancy and this was declined as there are vacancies available). I do not believe that my explanation was inaccurate but as you have raised issues, I would suggest you refer these two cases together with the third you refer to later in your letter (all within the same Directorate) to the Directorate Joint Committee (DJC) as advised in my last letter. If there are cases in other Directorates then provided those have also been considered by the relevant DJC's then, as a council wide policy or application of policy issue, I can consider it under Corporate Joint Committee as a policy issue. My role is not to 'police' activity in individual directorates nor to look at individual cases. My role in this context is to consider council wide issues relating to policy / application of employment policy.

At the heart of what Unison (and GMB) is seeking is a request for the Council to agree to suspend changes in the collective agreement on redundancy pay. Currently, the Council carries the second most expensive redundancy pay costs across all London Boroughs. As agreed with Unison and GMB on 1 November 2012, there is a small change to redundancy pay in 2014 with the main change taking place in 2015. By 2015, this will put Harrow Council into a more reasonable position in terms of cost – not, as some Councils are doing, by applying only the statutory scheme but still retaining a level of enhancement.

Although I accept that you have concerns about the practice on who is accepted for voluntary redundancy or bumped redundancy or who is redeployed, either temporarily or

permanently, this bears no relationship to the changes to redundancy pay taking effect in 2014 and 2015.

I am happy to consider policy / application of policy issues across the Council at CJC once these have been considered by the relevant DJC's.

On your point regarding signatories, I used a previous letter template to provide my last response and omitted to delete all previous content.

Finally, I am not inclined to respond in future to letters which I believe are not consistent with the Council's CREATE values and Code of Conduct for Employees. Although I have received far worse letters and e-mails from Unison, I would want correspondence in 2014 and beyond to be in keeping with the courteous approach when we meet face to face. I took mild offence at a number of references in your letter but particularly found offensive your phrase "double signoff is designed" to "reduce responsibility". I am also concerned that individual employees are identifiable by their job titles in a letter which has such a wide audience in breach of their rights. We are (myself and local trade union representatives) employees of the Council and we are therefore equally subject to the Council's Code of Conduct.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Clarke
Organisational Development Manager

Cc:

John Noblemunn, Regional Officer, Unison
Steve Sweeney, Regional Officer, GMB
Cllr Susan Hall, Leader of the Council
Cllr Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder
Cllr David Perry, Labour Group Leader
Cllr Chris Noyce, Leader of the Liberal Democrats
Cllr James Bond, Leader of the Independent Group
Cllr thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the ILG
Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service
Tom Whiting, Corporate Director Resources
Jon Turner, Divisional Director of HRD & Shared Services