

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM: 23rd NOVEMBER 2016

EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON KENMORE NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCE CENTRE (NRC) FAILED COMMUNITY TENDER

SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED

UNISON welcomes as a resolution the combined proposal to address the current financial situation as a result of budgetary cuts to the NRC's implemented earlier this year. However, it is imperative that the proposal requires political support and buy-in from all senior officers of the Council. We must remember that any commercial activity is for the benefit of the council, and not, as previously described by a senior officer, as merely "*a social service issue*" which only demonstrates pomposity and silo working. UNISON is seeking written assurance that all directorates, including the Peoples Directorate and its lead officers, are fully compliant and committed to this key strategic objective as embodied in the proposal and that the experiences our members have endured in light of the failed Kenmore NRC Community Tender are never repeated.

CHRONOLOGY

DATE	ACTION	OUTCOME
5/07/2016	Special DJC Meeting	UNISON informed that 'TUPE does not apply', contrary to information relayed to unions and Cabinet earlier in 2016, and that 'redundancy does'. UNISON announced that due to a lack of governance of this issue, external intervention through ACAS would be sought for arbitration.
21/07/2016	ECF Sub-Group Meeting	UNISON informed that, despite the Council not knowing if TUPE applies, that a tender process will commence nevertheless to identify a new Community Management bidder. UNISON also informed that a further ECF meeting will be convened as to any changing developments. This was communicated to ACAS by senior management in the Peoples Directorate following UNISON arbitration requests.

REPORT

UNISONS' brief report tonight is in full compliance with the instruction given to ACAS by senior officers of the London Borough of Harrow in regard to the failed Kenmore NRC Community Tender attempt.

The Kenmore NRC tender process and the lengthy time it has taken has enacted costs which could and should have been avoided at an earlier stage.

It is now a well-established fact that outsourcing services is not at all cost effective or beneficial to a local authority. There are many experiences in Harrow where outsourcing has not worked and has failed dismally. The recent documentary (*Whose Spending Britain's Millions*) on local authority expenditure with companies such as Capita, support the fact that many local authorities are still taken in by the sales pitches of falsehoods such as transformations and transitions which in reality are simply only buzz words that cost the tax payer money and deliver nothing of any quality in reality.

The NRC's represent value for money if operated on a commercial basis, which has now, finally, been accepted and agreed by the DASS officer and her team. Harrow has the perfect opportunity to work in partnership with other councils, sharing costs, meeting savings targets and increasing capacity of well-run local services residents and their families rely on. This gives our service users and residents peace of mind knowing that Harrow Council, with its exemplar reputation in the provision of services to vulnerable residents, continues to do so as a long standing and well trusted provider.

We are all aware of the financial impact on the vulnerable and elderly as a result of the needless and relentless budgetary cuts by central government, which should be the basis for increased lateral thinking and sharing costs in order that our most vulnerable receive services of the highest standard.

UNISON welcomes a joint proposal in draft to meet all the Councils objectives both financial and of course service provision. This type of proposal demonstrates Harrow Council's commitment to the commercial agenda i.e. securing jobs, meeting the needs of Harrows residents and future proofing local authority run services.

Adult Services is the perfect area to enter a known void in the market as it is well recognised that the NHS are under extreme pressure, which is then passed onto local authorities with no reasonable intermediate provision in care. This enacts an opportunity to enter the market and provide a reasonable solution rather than continue to fund high cost outplacements which local authorities use on a knee jerk reaction and on a continued basis. This is classified as reactive solutions and not a proactive solution that meets everyone's cost need in line with the Council's strategic objective. The Council has a number of mechanisms that require thinking outside of the box which include the Council entering a partnership arrangement with another authority or establishing trading arms which do not have shareholders within the business matrix.

Such thinking and compliance with strategic objectives require commitments from all key players and head of departments. To that end, this evening UNISON is seeking written assurance that all directorates, including the Peoples Directorate and its lead officers, are fully compliant and committed to this key strategic objective as embodied in the proposal and that the experiences our members have endured in light of the failed Kenmore NRC Community Tender are never repeated again.

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