

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM GMB

On the 25th July 2006, the GMB Union received a copy of the Report of the Financial Position which is to go before Cabinet on 3rd August 2006. We have been asked to comment on the Report. Given the very short time frame, any comments that are made are on the basis that the GMB has not had sufficient time in which to consult its members on a Report that has far reaching consequences for our members, many of whom are also residents of the Borough.

Notwithstanding the above, the GMB wish to make the following points:

At Appendix 1, point 5 – the GMB is in disagreement with the proposal for staff to pay for the privilege of attending work. Employees will look to alternative methods of coming to and going from work, for example public transport and car sharing. While we acknowledge this will be advantageous for the environment, this will not produce the income that Council is seeking to generate.

At Appendix 1, point 6 – employees who wish to have paid leave for Christmas should be preserved. We are concerned as to the methodology used that would show a £200,000 savings over a period of two years and we would seek further information on this point.

At Appendix 1, point 7 – this proposal would have a serious impact on many of our members, in terms of changing Bank / Building Society details, direct debit mandates and standing orders. For those employees with savings accounts and mortgages, they would be disadvantaged in receiving interest on the money going into their account normally on the 25th of every month.

At Appendix 1, point 9 – while we acknowledge that overtime working is not normally contractual for most employees, many of our members, specially the low paid become dependent on these payments in order to maintain a basic standard of living. Again we object to the proposal.

At Appendix 1, point 17 – the GMB understands that the savings sought are in part in respect of school clothing grants. The Council should be proud of the support it provides to the needs of families on very low incomes and to remove these grants could see children being stigmatised and traumatised.

At Appendix 1, point 18 – we have no information on the specific cost savings that the Council wish to make. However the GMB's proportion of the facilities budget is currently lower than that of other comparator Boroughs.

At Appendix 1, point 29 – the GMB note that there is a very large increase in the savings between 2006/07 and 2007/08. We would wish to know where this additional savings would come from. Should it be that the Council is considering extremely large increases in penalty charges, the GMB would be concerned about the safety implications for our members who are already subjected to unacceptable levels of violence from members of the public

At Appendix 1, point 34 – by removing street lighting maintenance this would have serious safety and social implications. Many of our members, particularly those in Public Realm work unsocial hours in the nighttime and early morning. These members of staff will be vulnerable in terms of their health and safety and welfare by way of working in poorly lighted areas.

At Appendix 1, point 57 GMB policy is that where those who receive a hot meal service this should continue. It is our experience that where frozen meals services have been bought in to replace a hot meal service then the clients levels of satisfaction decreases significantly. Furthermore this would have implications for disabled people and others who may not have the facility to safely heat frozen food.

At Appendix 1, point 59 – the GMB wishes to receive further information.

At Appendix 2, Home Care Subsidies – the GMB would wish to see the subsidy for Home Care retained at its current level.

At Appendix 2 – Value for Money – the proposal suggests that unit cost can be brought down by way of looking at the terms and conditions of employment of former Harrow Council employees. We see this as a direct attack on our members who should receive the benefit of the protection of TUPE. Managers of the service have recently instructed home carers to stick rigidly to the time set out in the care plan and to vacate clients homes regardless of whether the client is in the bath, in the middle of dressing or sitting on a commode. The dignity of the vulnerable must be preserved while at the same time Harrow Council should be rewarding their former loyal employees rather than looking to work with the service provider on a policy of diminishing our members terms and conditions.

Tony Warr
Regional Officer

Jill Rothwell

From: "Martin Nolan" <m.nolan@harrow-unison.org.uk> [harrow-unison.org.uk.m.nolan] on behalf of harrow-unison.org.uk.m.nolan
Sent: 01 August 2006 10:55
To: harrow-unison.org.uk.SKaria; harrow-unison.org.uk.JTurner
Cc: Jill Rothwell; harrow-unison.org.uk.tony.warr; harrow-unison.org.uk.JRattray; harrow-unison.org.uk.SDuffell; harrow-unison.org.uk.AFerrari; harrow-unison.org.uk.PNajsare; harrow-unison.org.uk.info; harrow-unison.org.uk.e.coulson
Subject: RE: Financial Savings Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

Attachments: TEXT.htm; Mime.822



TEXT.htm (10 KB) Mime.822 (16 KB)

Dear Jon All

The feedback from members has been considerable across the departments of the council generally expressing feelings of apprehension and concern in regards to service delivery to our residents and clients, terms and conditions of our members and security of their posts.

These and many other relevant issues need to be discussed with yourself and my trade union colleagues tomorrow 2/8/06 at 10am.

I look forward to meeting you all then

Martin Nolan

Branch Secretary

Harrow UNISON

0208 424 1795

From: Jon Turner [mailto:jon.turner@harrow.gov.uk]
Sent: 31 July 2006 13:46
To: Martin Nolan; Sanjay Karia
Cc: tony.warr@gmb.org.uk; Jill Rothwell; Paul Najsarek; Anthony Ferrari; e.coulson@unison.co.uk
Subject: Financial Savings Consultations

Martin/Sanjay

We have not, as yet, received any comments or feedback from UNISON or GMB in respect of the Financial Report that Cabinet will consider at its meeting on Thursday, 3 August.

The deadline for submitting any comments to Jill Rothwell is c.o.b. on Wednesday. Any comments submitted will be tabled for consideration by Cabinet on Thursday night.

Please contact either Jill or me if you want to meet on Wednesday or have any comments feedback that you want to submit for Cabinet to consider.

Regards

Jon Turner
Acting Director of Human Resources
Tel: 020 8424 1225

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Meeting with TU on Budget – 2nd August 2006

Present Sanjay Karia – GMB
 Chris Birch – GMB
 Martin Nolan – UNISON
 Steve Compton – UNISON
 Shirley Duffell – UNISON

Jill Rothwell – Acting Chief Executive
Jon Turner – Head of HR

General Comments from UNISON

1. Concern at impact of proposals on service delivery and the quality and level of services to clients
2. Impact on T & C of employees
3. Sustainability - security of posts of their members in the longer term.

Unison indicated that their comments were affected by: -

- A lack of detail of savings analysis or an indication of how the savings target had been arrived at.
- Issues raised by members in all departments

UNISON Comments on PEOPLE FIRST

54. Care packages being cut back though charging customers so already affecting services to clients. Real concern For Unions as now delivering services to clients assessed as 'critical' need only. This is having impact on their members because of pressure from Managers & complaints from community. Employees would be on the receiving end of 'flack' from the client and concerns were expressed regarding PF approach to dealing with complainants. Unison view was that PF took the view– customer right/employee wrong.
55. JR stated this related to disputes with the PCT over continued funding for these posts so the intention was to redeploy d staff to posts elsewhere within the directorate.
PF to Identify specific posts to Unison
56. Unison requested further information on this item. ***PF to provide***
57. Unison's view was that this proposal could not be achieved. They felt that the removal of hot meals would have a detrimental impact on clients in that the MOW service is often the only contact an elderly person receives. Some clients would not be capable w of reheating the meals with out additional home care support., UNISON would prefer a strict review of who is receiving meals suggesting that many clients were currently inappropriately receiving meals. They asked if the necessary equipment had been identified and raised the impact on catering & transport staff.

58. Service & staff concerns. Concern was expressed at the reduction in the overall number of places Day centres were already a scarce resource, and proposal is contrary to Govt. care policy on community care issues. Insufficient vacant posts to redeploy people. Clients will have to travel further.
60. Clashes with Govt. policy on supporting working parents. Seems that new administration's policy is 'if can't pay tough'
- 65 -67 Links to work supporting the community and education it seems council is moving away from policies supporting these.
- 61 Delays in discharging clients from hospital will result in transferring of work to area teams
63. Use of grant to fund a post will impact on service
64. Minimal savings produce impact on essential services

UNSON Comments on URBAN LIVING

Steve Compton to raise details with Michael Hart at meeting later today.

34. Public Safety impact – concern at ability to meet requirements of Safer Neighbourhood Act.
- 37/38. Impact on front line staff – staff morale already low following earlier changes this will result in further detriment to conditions
- 41 An alternative would be to put in perennial plants
46. Concerns regarding council having to pick up other costs further down the line through lack of involvement in Town Centre management
47. Concern at impact on staff
44. Impact on public safety/security. Non-locking of gates will result in car parks being accessible at night by vehicles will result in antisocial behaviour problems. West Harrow Park (amongst others) has elderly people living near the car park. It will also result in deterioration of the Parks infrastructure with impact on green flag areas/ tourism.
- 5 Linked review of MOW and will have impact on catering staff
52. Ongoing and linked to (Item 9) management of overtime

General concerns that not enough information has been provided at the meetings to address all their concerns

Concern that the savings may still not be realised and there may be further impact

Access Harrow – Not proceeding with service points creates further pressure in Access Harrow OSS, which was not designed to provide the whole of the service.

Not convinced that the savings figures are accurate.

UNISON Comments on C.EX & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

19. Concerned about impact on HR Team of decreasing the resources but increasing the workload – not good for staff
18. Would want to enter into dialogue and consultation with other TU's including teaching TUs

JNISON Comments on CROSS CUTTING ITEMS

Main priority is services and jobs but members are concerned about car parking.

5. Strong depth of feeling amongst members. Concerned proposals do not take into account cost of technology to implement and the impact on Essential Car Users
7. Potential nightmare for staff with Direct Debits or standing orders, particularly for those with mortgages with different lenders
11. The phrase 'Take out', can be misinterpreted! Some agency staff may have employment rights

UNISON Closing Comments

Concern that this is a knee-jerk reaction to the problem that is not of their members making. Would want to review why it has happened and develop procedures to avoid any future repetition and enter into longer-term dialogue to deal with budget problems.

Additional Comments from GMB

A detailed response has been received from the GMB. In addition they expressed concern that they had not had sufficient time to engage their membership on 81 points and have meaningful discussions with the council. Keen to understand how the proposals will be implemented, what will be the impact and how sustainable are they.

5. Car Parking – Concerned about financial impact on members

Want to clarify not in agreement with the proposals and want to enter into dialogue on how the proposal will be implemented?

General Discussion

In response to the question of timing JR explained the proposals could not be put off as explained by Cllr David Ashton. There was an urgent need to deal with the current budget problems and then we would be able to look longer term around stabilising the council's budget position. JR also explained the 5 projects were looking at longer-term savings.

In response to the question how did we get here? JR explained that there had been budget assumptions & decisions made in the past that had caused some of the problems, other issues e.g. pressures caused by PCT, LAGBI, level of govt grant were outside of our control.

UNISON expressed concerns that the council had failed to deliver that message through managers, and that the majority of staff do not understand the issues with PCT or others. UNISON suggested a single paper with bullet points outlining the position might be more effective.

UNISON expressed their members concerns that if the administration were prepared 'to decimate the services to the community' what would they be prepared to do to staff? JT emphasised that the Leader had stated that they did not want staff to bear the burden of the budget problems and had chosen not to consider proposals, which may have had a more direct impact. JT reminded that the Leader and Cllr Ashton had offered to meet with the TUs to discuss the budget and Cllr Ashton had also offered to meet with the TU following this meeting.

In response to a question about reserves JR explained the financial position and importance of improving the level of reserves

In response to question about the level of grant, JR explained that the council like all other authorities engaged in lobbying Gov't and that we also lobbied through the West London Alliance.

JR advised that JT would be arranging a further meeting for early next week to discuss implementation.

JT advised that the meeting would establish the framework for implementation consultation arrangements and requested that the TUs consider who they would want to lead on specific departmental proposals.

2 August 2006

Jill Rothwell
Acting Chief Executive

Dear Jill

I am writing in response to your letter published in the newsletter yesterday, and in my capacity as Local Representative for ASPECT (Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts), formerly NAEIAC.

I wrote last week to Jon Turner, Acting Director HR, regarding the specific proposals, which may directly affect ASPECT members. These are the proposal to introduce "a decreased subsidy" for car staff parking at the Civic Centre and the proposal to change the pay date to the end of the month. I append a copy of my original note to Jon.

Jon informed me that, "the proposals to charge a subsidised rate for car parking and to change the pay date will be subject to more detailed development, if agreed by Cabinet. Any detailed work up of these proposals will, of course, take into account legal and contractual considerations".

I note that there is no legal note about the implications for these proposals in the Documents for Cabinet. Therefore a Member of Cabinet may be entitled to assume that there is no legal impediment to carry out these proposals. I am surprised that such a proposal is being submitted for consideration when you will know very well that there **are** legal and contractual implications. I believe that you are seriously misleading the Cabinet about the legal basis for the implementation of these two proposals. I also believe that there are equalities issues connected with these as well.

If you continue to press on with these two proposals, I shall want to arrange a time for myself, and a national representative from ASPECT, to meet with you and your officers to discuss the matter in more detail.

Kind regards

Brenda Rayson
Local Representative
ASPECT

Anriexe

Dear Jon

I am writing in my capacity as Local Representative for ASPECT (Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts), formerly NAEIAC.

The Q & A document, posted on the Corporate intranet regarding the Council's lamentable financial position, states that Unions have been consulted on the recent proposals to be put to Cabinet next week. I was surprised to note this assertion, since I certainly have not been consulted in my capacity as local representative for my professional association

As you know it is simply good practice to consult all bona fide unions on matters that directly affect their members employed within an organisation. When will the Council adopt good practice? I have mentioned several times both to you and your predecessors that ASPECT is fully recognised nationally for trade union functions, including pay bargaining. Some of these proposals directly affect ASPECT members and I would be pleased if you would follow good practice in consulting properly. We may even have some advice to offer managers, since good practice in employment conditions usually leads to a more content workforce, efficiency and better productivity, which is what we all want - as well as the Investors In People badge.

I am seeking further advice from my Association Head Office on the contractual issues for some of the proposals and I shall write again in due course.

Meanwhile, I do not believe my employment contract, or those of my colleagues, refers to my receiving a financial subsidy from the Council for parking at the Civic Centre. My employment classification does include that of essential car user, which requires me to use a car for work. I think there would have been relevant tax notices issued in respect of this "subsidy", had it been the case. And therefore I shall be pleased to receive from you the legal basis for implementing this proposal. The proposed figure, some £500 pa, amounts to a significant proportion of current salary, particularly for those employees affected, who are paid on lower grades.

As an aside, and I am not acknowledging the proposal is acceptable, stronger "motivational leadership" would be displayed by executive directors had they chosen to suggest a sliding scale - say £3500 for executive directors would be in better proportion to the £500 proposal expected from the lowest paid employees affected.

Similarly, I will be pleased to receive from you the legal basis for changing the pay date. Again, I note no thought has been given to the impact of such a proposal on employees. Maybe executive directors are simply paid too much if they have failed to understand this. This is not simply a matter of employees re-organising domestic standing orders and direct debits, or their loss of bank interest each month. But for many colleagues with significant financial commitments, having to manage an additional week before pay is credited in the month of implementation will be a substantial burden that may lead some into debt. If you are able to prove a legal basis, I shall be pressing you strongly to introduce a phased implementation over six months to avoid such hardships, - extending the pay date by an additional day each month - alternatively the availability of interest free loans during the implementation period.

Of course some national newspaper columns would have a field day - after 3 years during which a disastrous top-level re-organisation is followed by an appallingly managed Middle Management Review, "employees have to bail out council"!

I look forward to receiving your written explanation of the legal basis for these two proposals by the end of the week. And, I trust you will include me in any further consultations with unions on these matters.

Kind regards

Brenda Rayson
Local Representative
ASPECT