

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM****3 JULY 2007**

Chairman:	* Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath	
Councillors:	* Bob Currie * Tony Ferrari (4) * Graham Henson	* Joyce Nickolay (1) * Paul Osborn * Mrs Sasi Suresh (3)
Representatives of HTCC:	(Currently no appointees)	
Representatives of UNISON:	Ms L Ahmad * Ms K Bubenzer * Ms M Cawley	* Mr S Compton * Mr G Martin * Mr R Thomas
Representative of GMB:	* Mr S Karia	

\* Denotes Member present/Employee Representative present  
(1), (3) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**51. **Appointment of Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the appointment at the meeting of Cabinet on 15 May 2007 of Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath as Chairman of the Employees' Consultative Forum.

52. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor David Ashton  
Councillor Chris Mote  
Councillor Navin Shah

Reserve Member

Councillor Tony Ferrari  
Councillor Joyce Nickolay  
Councillor Mrs Sasi Suresh

53. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the following declarations of interest made by Members present relating to the business to be transacted at this meeting:

- (i) Councillor Graham Henson declared a 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 all items of the agenda.
- (ii) Councillor Bob Currie declared a 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 all items of the agenda.

54. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

**RESOLVED:** That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

Agenda itemSpecial Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 14. Essential User Car Allowance | These reports were not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were requested to consider these items, as a matter of urgency. |
| 15. Customer complaint process   |   |
| 16. Organisational review        |   |

(2) all items be considered with the press and public present.

55. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2007 be deferred until printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

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

**RESOLVED:** To appoint Mr Bob Thomas as Vice-Chairman of the Employees' Consultative Forum for the 2007/2008 Municipal Year.

57. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

58. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

59. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

60. **Health and Safety Annual Report 2006/2007:**

The Forum considered a report of the Corporate Director (Finance) setting out details of the Council's health and safety performance, information about work done and a summary of data on accidents and incidents. Officers answered questions on various issues arising from the report, including the following:

- Evidence for the statement in the report that the Group Plan process was embedding well – an officer reported that a survey had been conducted, and UNISON members requested a copy of the evidence.
- The unions' concern at how stress-related illness was recorded – the officer reported that the new SAP system would record this more thoroughly.
- The availability of statistics on stress-related illness linked to the introduction of Access Harrow – officers reported that these statistics went to the Health and Safety Partnership Board and in this way were available to the unions.
- Information gained as a result of employing a consultant on stress, and the fact that the Council was still owed several days' work by the consultant – the officer agreed to supply this information.
- The lack of health-related activities available for employees – the officer reported that a health fair would be taking place later in July to demonstrate a range of health-related activities and establish the level of employees' interest.
- The need to publicise events such as the health fair to employees outside the Civic Centre, in view of the fact that many staff worked in schools and some staff did not have access to the internet – a Member reported that the issue of communications would be addressed in a report to the next Cabinet meeting.
- The issue of low levels of attendance by employees at the Education Health and Safety Forum – the officer reported that this problem had been noted and he agreed to supply a copy of a letter to schools about allowing employees time off to attend such meetings.
- The fact that an annual report on the work of the Occupational Health Service had not been provided for 2006/2007 – officers agreed to investigate obtaining this for the Forum, but pointed out that this information would be reported to the Health at Work Group.
- The imminent review of the Post-Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Action Plan, which was due to come to the next meeting of the Forum.

- The delay in recruiting a Fire Safety Adviser – the officer reported that a third attempt was being made to recruit to this post. If this proved unsuccessful, current members of staff could be invited to be trained to carry out this role.
- The number of prosecutions as a result of violent attacks on Council staff – officers agreed to obtain the information from Legal Services.
- A suggestion that the Council liaise with other local authorities on the issue of violent or potentially violent individuals moving between boroughs – the officer agreed to ensure that this was done.
- The recording of ‘near-misses’ in accident statistics – officers agreed that these should be recorded separately.
- The number of days lost as a result of accidents – officers reported that data from the SAP system would be analysed and reported on a six-monthly basis, but was available earlier. The unions would request updates on a regular basis.

Members discussed related issues to be covered in a report to the Corporate Management Team on well-being, noting that the report included an action plan, but not costings.

It was agreed that further questions from UNISON on the Health and Safety Annual Report could be submitted to the Chairman in writing.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and the above comments be noted.

61. **HR Policy Review:**

Officers provided a verbal update on the progress of the HR Policy Review, which included new policies and procedures for employees. Responses from the unions had not been provided by agreed deadlines and the officer was concerned at the delays. After discussion it was agreed that the officer would provide a presentation to both unions, and that the unions would respond by the end of July. Failing this, a special meeting of the Forum would be convened.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

62. **Asbestos:**

The Forum received a report of UNISON, expressing concerns and seeking information about the removal of asbestos in the Access Harrow area in 2006. A representative of UNISON expressed the concern that a written response to the union's concerns had not been prepared in time for distribution before this meeting. It was agreed that the officer's written response be circulated to all members of the Forum and that, failing satisfactory resolution of the issues, a special meeting of the Forum be convened.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

63. **Front Desk Reception Area:**

The Forum considered a report of UNISON, expressing concerns about health and safety issues relating to the front desk in the main reception area. An officer informed members that it was already accepted that changes needed to be made, and new desks and chairs would be in place by the end of July. The officer agreed to circulate copies of the relevant risk assessment to the unions. The representative of GMB also raised the issue of the number and frequency of breaks allowed for staff working at the front desk.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

64. **Essential User Car Allowance:**

The Forum received an officer report, setting out the current position regarding the introduction of criteria for eligibility to the Essential User Car Allowance (EUCA). The officer informed members of the Forum that agreement had originally been reached with the unions in April 2007, but that since then the unions had sought to renegotiate the terms of the agreement. UNISON was currently conducting a ballot on the issue, but formal response to the revised proposals had been received from the GMB. The representative of the GMB reported that the union was still consulting its members. It was also seeking assurances that car parking charges would not be introduced. A representative of UNISON informed members of the Forum that the union had agreed to the original proposals on the understanding that they were aimed at making savings of £200,000 and not £400,000, as currently projected. After discussion it was agreed that the unions would aim to respond formally by the end of the week.

The officer confirmed that the proposals had been subjected to an Equality Impact Assessment.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

65. **Customer Complaint Process:**

Owing to the lack of time, it was

**RESOLVED:** That this matter be discussed at the next meeting.

66. **Organisational Review:**

The Forum received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which provided background information and confirmed the current position with regard to the organisational review.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy be noted.

67. **Any Other Business:**

(i) **Toilet facilities at the Central Depot**

A representative of UNISON informed the Forum that the Union had received no explanation as to why toilet facilities had been closed and keys issued only to certain members of staff.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

(ii) **The type of issues raised at this meeting**

Members agreed that in future more effort should be made to deal with issues raised by the Unions at an earlier stage.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

68. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**

In accordance with the Advisory and Consultative Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution) it was:

**RESOLVED:** At (1) 10.00 pm to continue until 10.15 pm;

(2) 10.15 pm to continue until 10.30 pm;

(3) 10.30 pm to continue until 10.32 pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.50 pm, closed at 10.32 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CAMILLA BATH  
Chairman