

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

11 DECEMBER 2008

Chairman: * Ms L Ahmad

Councillors: * David Ashton
* Mrs Camilla Bath
† Bob Currie
* Susan Hall* Graham Henson
* Phillip O'Dell
* Paul Osborn

Representatives of HTCC: (Currently no appointees)

Representatives of UNISON: * Ms M Cawley
* Ms A Jackson* Mr G Martin
Mr R Thomas

Representative of GMB: † Mr J Dunbar

* Denotes Member present/Employee Representative present

† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**130. **Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.131. **Declarations of Interest:****RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared in relation to the business to be transacted at the meeting:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
8. Children's Services (School Reorganisation)	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 all items on the agenda.
8. Children's Services (School Reorganisation)	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 all items on the agenda.
8. Children's Services (School Reorganisation) Consultation	Ms L Ahmad	Personal interest in that she was employed as a teaching assistant at Woodlands School, Edgware and was part of the SRG Schools Reorganisation Group and workforce sub-group. Accordingly, she would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision-making on all items on the agenda.

132. **Minutes:****RESOLVED:** That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record and

(2) the minutes of the Special meeting held on 8 September 2008 be considered at the next meeting of the Forum in order to clarify the attendance.

133. **Matters Arising:**

Minute 121 – 31 July 2008 - Annual Health and Safety Report

It was agreed that the appropriate officers be reminded to circulate the following information: the breakdown of the 150 health and safety visits referred to in the report, the report back on the arrangements for managing and monitoring Legionella, and the safety audit reports.

134. **Petitions, Deputations and Public Questions.:**

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, 15 respectively (Part 4E of the Constitution).

135. **UNISON Report on the use of CCTV:**

The Chairman advised that UNISON wished to withdraw the item.

RESOLVED: That the decision by UNISON to withdraw the item be noted.

136. **Children's Services (School Reorganisation):**

The Forum received the report of the Director of Schools and Children's Development which presented the school reorganisation proposals for consideration and comments as part of the consultation process.

The Forum was informed that the report submitted to Cabinet in June and the consultation booklet set out the background to the proposals, the specific changes proposed, the impact of those changes, and the work of the Stakeholder Reference Group, which looked carefully at issues that impacted on colleagues. The school reorganisation consultation event was held from Monday 8 September 2008 and the consultation responses would be reported to Cabinet on 15 January 2009. Cabinet would then decide whether to publish statutory proposals with a view to implementing the proposed changes.

The Chairman drew attention to the Springboard initiative whereby staff could declare an interest in working in a different school. The first estimate of staff numbers affected by the reorganisation was 85 but might be substantially more. Schools would require support during the transition period.

In response to a question as to the anticipated cost of human resources and facility time to ensure consultation and a smooth transition, the Director of Schools and Children's Development stated that discussions could not pre-empt the decision of Cabinet as to whether to proceed with the statutory notice period. Natural turnover, which took place for a variety of reasons, would be taken into account and schools needed to be realistic that fewer staff might be required. Schools were being encouraged to develop staffing structures to meet the proposed arrangements to enable them to commence modelling and to recruit to the new structures. Subject to Cabinet approval to proceed, human resources and Trade Union facility time requirements would be considered by the workforce group.

A UNISON representative stated that support should be available for those staff raising grievances and he would be concerned if people did not have access to processes to complain.

The Forum was informed that every school had been offered support by education and human resources officers at meetings of staff, governors or parents. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) and other unions had been invited to talk to staff. The Council would ensure that human resources support and advice would be available to Governors in addition to a set of detailed guidance to ensure that procedures were adhered to.

The Chairman reminded the officers that schools were awaiting information regarding FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions). She considered that a confidential helpline would be beneficial.

A Member sought assurances that the selection process would be uniform and had inbuilt appeals procedures. The Forum was advised that there were standard selection procedures and that nothing, including the Springboard support, would circumvent these procedures. There was no intention to move staff from year 2 to high school but

that some primary teachers were trained to teach secondary school pupils. Staff currently teaching special school children might wish to transfer with them to the senior school. Early work was being undertaken to ensure that the structure enabled recruitment procedures which maximised the possibility of change in a positive way to offer opportunities.

The Divisional Director of Human Resources and Development stated that there would be guidance on the process for selection for redundancy and that in the event that there were more staff than could be accommodated, those displaced would have a right to raise a grievance or appeal against termination.

In response to a question about potential issues in relation to pay, it was stated that each case would need to be considered on an individual basis.

It was noted that the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services, all members of Cabinet and the Forum, were present at this meeting and taking comments on board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 7.50 pm)

(Signed) MS L AHMAD
Chairman