

Committee:	Employees' Consultative Forum
Date:	28 October 2009
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Establishment of a Joint Secretary for UNISON and GMB
Responsible Officer:	Jon Turner - Divisional Director of Human Resources and Development
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn - Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report sets out the arrangements in place for a Joint Secretary for UNISON and GMB to facilitate negotiation and consultation under the Better Deal for Residents transformational programme.

### **FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

The council is entering a period of significant change leading to a transformation in how the council delivers services. This will require both unions (GMB and UNISON) to be engaged in consultation on the processes and effects of the

change. Both unions have expressed concerns regarding their ability to support this level of transformation from within the existing secondment arrangements and this could lead to delays in effecting the change required.

The Council has therefore agreed to create and fund a Joint Secretary role to ensure that it is able to communicate effectively with the trade unions. Funding for full-time release has been agreed for one person effective from October 2009.

In consultation, Unison were supportive of the proposal to create a Joint Secretary role but GMB were not. However, in order to ensure effective consultation with both unions, management concluded that this was the most effective use of funding and union representative time and agreement to the funding was made by the Leader of the Council.

The terms of reference for the Joint Secretary and the conventions in how this role will operate are:

- The Joint Secretary will provide a consistent point of contact on negotiation / consultation with the HRD Lead on the 'Better Deal for Residents' Programme (the Programme).
- It is anticipated that there may be issues that will need to be addressed corporately and consequently the HRD Strategy Manager and the HRD Lead on the Programme will be liaising closely on these.
- A Programme Partnership Board has been established (with its own terms of reference). Any issues that are unresolved at this level will be referred to Directorate Joint Committees for issues that are specific to an individual Directorate and to the Corporate Joint Committee for cross-council unresolved issues. Due to the need for speed and the scale of change, there may be a need to establish emergency DJC and CJC fora for early consideration of the issues.
- For all practical purposes, negotiation and consultation with both UNISON and GMB will be two-way via the Joint Secretary. This does not preclude either union sending representatives to key meetings if they wish to do so. This practice, however, will be monitored by the HRD Lead to ensure effective use of the additional facility time agreed by the council.
- These arrangements are consistent with National and Local arrangements under the Joint Negotiating machinery.

### **Election of Joint Secretary**

For the first year, UNISON and GMB have agreed that the union with the greater membership take the Joint Secretary role – this will be UNISON and the Branch Secretary is currently considering which representative will take this role.

It is worth noting that the Branch Secretaries of both unions have discussed the arrangements and UNISON offered to reduce their current facility time

arrangements by one day in order that GMB could increase their facility time by one additional day. This change will be put in place when UNISON has identified the person to fill the role of the Joint Secretary.

In late summer of 2010, it is proposed to hold further discussions with both unions with the aim of both unions reaching agreement on who will take the Joint Secretary role for the following year.

Options include:

- Election by the staff side of the Employee Consultative Forum
- Nomination by a Trade union based on proportionality of membership
- Annual rotation between the Trade Unions

### **Implications**

Resources, costs and risks

Introducing the full-time release for a trade union representative to take a role as Joint Secretary seeks to ensure that both UNISON and GMB can participate fully in negotiation and consultation on the Better Deal for Residents programme whilst making best use of council funding.

### **Staffing/workforce**

The Better Deal for Residents transformation programme has significant staffing implications. The additional funding agreed by the Leader of the Council is intended to support collective bargaining and consultation processes to ensure that the views of union members are considered in any process of change.

### **Equalities impact**

There is no equalities impact from this arrangement.

### **Legal comments**

There are no legal implications from this arrangement.

### **Risk Management Implications**

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? / Yes – Better Deal for Residents transformation programme

## **Section 4 – Financial Implications**

The funding of £47,000, agreed by the Leader, to establish full-time release for a trade union representative to fill a Joint Secretary role, is believed to be both supportive of the need to ensure staff views are considered in transformational change whilst making best use of funded facility time arrangements.

Name: Jennifer Hydari



on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 15 October 2009

## **Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

Contact: Lesley Clarke, HRD Strategy Manager, 0208 420 9309

Background Papers: None