

EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM (6th December 2010 TBC)

EMPLOYEES' SIDE REPORT ON Trade Waste

SUMMARY AND DECISION REQUESTED

Unison would request that resolution to this issue be undertaken through a peer review which seems to be the custom and practice procedure of this forum; Unison cannot and will not accept a situation that has serious consequences for our frontline staff that have no control over this destructive situation.

CHRONOLOGY

Sets out the chronology of the issue including when and with whom the item has previously been raised and what the outcomes were at each stage e.g.

DATE	ACTION	OUTCOME
13/10/10	DJC	Was to request further information in writing.
14/10/10	In depth document from UNISON to Mr John Edwards	
19/10/10	Response from Mr John Edwards	
20/10/10	UNISON letter to Mr John Edwards	
26/10/10	Letter from Mr John Edwards to UNISON	Ending debate
29/10/10	Email from Miriam Wearing regarding report	
29/10/10	Response from Mr Gary Martin, to submit as agreed by ECF forum	
01/11/10	Email from Miriam Wearing requesting this matter return to DJC	
01/11/10	Email from Mr Gary Martin reminding Democratic Services of the consultation framework.	
02/11/10	Email from Lesley Clarke, requesting report requires returning to DJC	
02/11/10	Email from Mr Gary Martin stating this matter should not be suppressed but should be tabled for debate at ECF.	

REPORT

AUTHOR: Harrow UNISON LG Branch: Harrow GMB Branch

Unison is extremely concerned by the constant erosion of the Council's trade waste service and the revenue it provides to support the services of the Local Authority. It is our opinion that the erosion constitutes poor management or gross incompetence. The probable affects of this erosion is certain job losses and the removal of vital equipment that enhances the service to residents. It also increases the possibility of LATs fines against Harrow Council if service delivery fails.

The lost revenue from schools alone equates to approximately £94,000 per annum, which to any business would invoke serious concerns, yet this loss is allowed to go unchallenged by the custodians of the service i.e. senior officers.

Unison has seen approximately an erosion of 3423 trade contracts to the now 600 remaining contracts. Again this matter has serious ramifications on the incumbent workforce, without any reflective impact on the senior officers responsible for service delivery. I would refer you to the Council's code of conduct section 2.3 which we tabled at the DJC meeting which states it is every employee's duty to raise concerns regarding the service
"Duty to report Failure in Service Standards"

The waste department has seen a massive reduction in equipment over a 3 year period i.e. a removal of two refuse trucks and a proposal to reduce even further. There was also a substantial reduction in staff from 123 front line to the now 112. These reductions were undertaken on a unilateral decision which was challenged by Unison. There was an agreement given by management that no affect on staff would be seen. As you will see from the aforementioned staffing figures the agreement was breached by management without justification. This matter was a back door redundancy exercise to protect those that constantly fail to deliver job security.

Trade waste is a vital source of revenue to the local authority and a tool to maintain control of waste generated by local businesses in the borough; this is also supported by DEFRA's position regarding local authority trade waste services.

We have been furnished with a letter from Mr Edwards Director of this service area which includes comments regarding commercially sensitive information and how it is inappropriate for Unison to disclose to a third external party. Firstly Unison has only disclosed the number of contracts lost by the department not the names of the customers therefore no breach of information has occurred. Secondly, is Mr. Edwards at all embarrassed by the unchallenged loss of vital council revenue which amounts to gross incompetency?

This situation had it occurred in the private sector would have incurred either a total removal or reform of the management structure at a senior level. Otherwise there would be a foreclosure of the business by the banking community who would oversee administration of a failed private sector company.

The supporting documentation attached to this report clearly identifies a desire by the management team to avoid this forum at all costs. Unison has to question their reticence to explain why they feel they are not accountable in respect to the staff they are responsible for. Unison would also request that this forum considers the trust aspect of this situation when security of employment is in the hands of those responsible for this deplorable situation.

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