

MINUTES OF HARINGEY COUNCIL AND EMPLOYEE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – 6 MARCH 2006

Employer's Side: Councillors: *Rice (Deputy Chair), *Diakides, Floyd, *Hillman, *Hoban Meehan, Sulaiman and Wynne.

Employees' Side: *Cindy Westcarr (Chair), *John Snelling (Employee Side Secretary), *Karen Duberry, Cyril Andrews (TGWU/ACTSS), Pat Forward, Frank Brown (UCATT), *Steve Coles, Sean Fox, Sue Garnett, *Patrick Quinn (GMB) and *Chris Taylor, Gerard McGrath, Tony Brockman (Soulbury)
(Representatives are UNISON, unless otherwise stated).

*[Members present]

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Cllr Sulaiman, Cllr Meehan, Cllr Wynne and Cllr Floyd from the Employer's Side.

Apologies were received from Sean Fox, Pat Forward, Cyril Andrews and Sue Garnett from the Employee's Side.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr Hillman declared that he was a member of the NUT.

3. MINUTES and MATTERS ARISING:

RESOLVED:

- a. That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2005, be confirmed and signed subject to the correction that Cllr Hillman left the room at one point in the meeting due to his declaration of interest.
- b. That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2006 be confirmed and signed.

MATTERS ARISING:

The Employee Side expressed concern that they had not seen the violence at work posters being displayed at some council officers. They reported there were none in the reception at Civic Centre or River Park House.

The Head of Personnel, Stuart Young, pledged that he would conduct an audit of who received the posters. He informed the Committee the posters had been distributed by Communications. He said he would ask Communications to email recipients of the posters to ask them to display them, preferably next to the Customer Charter.

Mr. Coles from the Employee Side raised a matter relating to the TMO on Broadwater Farm. He expressed concern about a leaflet seen as threatening that had been issued by some members of the Shadow Board and about what had been said by some members to staff.

Cllr Diakides informed the Committee that the issue of the leaflet had been taken up with the Shadow Board. He said he wanted the staff, the Council and the Board to work together to make the transition to a TMO work.

Cllr Diakides mentioned that the timetable for transfer to a TMO and the ballot had slipped. This was because there was a dispute with the ODPM regarding the release of grants.

Mr. Young advised members that he was attending regular meetings between Steve Clarke (the Director of Housing) and trade union representatives. Cllr Diakides and Mr. Young stated that the Council was striving to be a good employer and this included handling the transition to an ALMO and a TMO in such a way as to minimise stress for staff.

The trade union side mentioned there was a meeting on 16th March being arranged which would include representatives from the Shadow Board. They asked the Head of Personnel to attend. Mr. Young agreed that Personnel would be represented.

4. URGENT BUSINESS:

There were no items of urgent business.

5. HSE ACTION PLAN REPORT:

The Head of Personnel, Mr. Young, introduced this report and presented it to the JCC.

Mr. Young informed the Committee that the HSE had carried out a snapshot inspection of the Council's health and safety systems in November 2005. They presented their findings to CEMB in December 2005. CEMB then requested that Mr. Young draft an action plan by the end of February and submit it to the HSE. This had been completed to timescale.

In their report, the HSE had identified a training as a strength of the Council. Mr. Young informed the JCC that they had recommended that some training courses should be mandatory on health & safety issues.

Mr. Young stated that the HSE had been pleased with the systems and procedures the Council had in place. However, they had expressed concern at the slow pace of implementation of some policies.

The HSE reported that the Parking Service had a good system of risk assessment. They also reported that the Council had a good stress management procedure at its call centres.

Mr. Young stated that the HSE had been pleased with the operation of DCCs and health and safety reps. He said they thought the operation of the system was good. However, he also mentioned that they reported that the Corporate safety liaison network had fallen into disuse.

Following the occurrence of the school fire, Mr. Young reported that the HSE examined the work that was done afterwards. They made recommendations regarding improving the way health and safety was handled with contractors and sub-contractors.

The HSE had requested that there be greater visibility for accident statistics. Mr. Young proposed that these statistics should go to the JCC to inform the Committee of the situation at the corporate level.

The Employee Side expressed the view that there needed to be a firmer commitment to funding for the Health & Safety and Occupational Health sections. Both these sections were felt to be understaffed.

Ms. Holden, the Branch Health & Safety officer for Unison, expressed concern about e-learning being used to train people for DFE risk assessments. Hard copies needed to be made available of information on Harinet, as many staff did not have access to the network.

The Employee Side stated that more continuity in attendance from managers was required at Health & Safety meetings. There was a high turnover in attendees.

The view was expressed that the monitoring of contractors needed to be improved, since the Employee Side thought the current systems were poor.

The Employee Side wanted the Corporate Health & Safety committee to meet before 1st May. Mr. Young said this would be possible and he would work to arrange this.

The Employee Side wished that the issue of vacancies in the Health & Safety and Occupational Health teams, as well as the need to investigate an increase in the teams' complement be added to the action plan. Mr. Young stated that the vacancies issue was being tackled, as they were trying to recruit to these posts. He said that increasing the complement of staff would require more income-generating activities for the team. At the moment, one-third of Occupational Health's budget was self-financing.

The Chair expressed concern at a lack of staff training on dealing with people with TB or HIV. The last course she was aware of had taken place 12 years ago. She said that there was a need for a course to alert staff to these issues as the number of people in the borough suffering from TB and from HIV/AIDS was increasing.

Concern was expressed about whether the violence at work poster had been distributed to schools. Mr. Young agreed that, when he did the audit of where the posters had gone to, he would include schools.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the submission of the action plan to the HSE be noted and agreed.
3. That accident reports and statistics should be submitted to the JCC for information.

6. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS:

There were no new items of urgent business.

7. AOB:

RESOLVED:

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year, it was resolved that a nominee from the Employer's Side be the Chair for the forthcoming municipal year (2006/7).

It was resolved to thank Cindy Westcarr for her work as Chair of the Committee for the current municipal year.

The meeting ended at 20:30

Cindy Westcarr
CHAIR