



# EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2009

## SUPPLEMENTAL COMMITTEE AGENDA (ADVISORY AND CONSULTATIVE)

7. **UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services:**  
The management response to the UNISON report on Housing: Restructuring of Services (Pages 1 - 4)

8. **Exclusion of the Press and Public:**  
To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence, or of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
7.	UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services. Appendices to Management Response	Information under paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, relating to any individual

- 7a. Appendices to Management Response to Item 7. (Pages 5 - 56)

*Note: In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following information has been admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and urgency detailed below:-*

Agenda item

Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency

7. UNISON Report on Housing: Restructuring of Services - Management Response

This information was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. It was late to enable the inclusion of information on the latest position with regard to voluntary severance and opportunities for redeployment, the closing date for which was 23 March 2009.



Meeting:	Employee Consultative Forum
Date:	1 April 2009
Subject:	Housing Services Response to Unison Concerns on HaRP Restructure
Responsible Officer:	Gwyneth Allen, Divisional Director, Housing Service
Exempt:	No (except for Part II Appendices by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that they contain information relating to any individual
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – minutes of Housing Joint Committee meetings Appendix 2 – Report of 1 December 2008 provided to staff and Unions Appendix 3 – Issues Log Appendix 4 – Consultation Timetable Appendix 5 - AHJC Information Update 23.02.09

## Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the process for the HaRP restructure of Housing Services and addresses the concerns raised by Unison regarding the restructuring process.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **2.1 Background**

Unison has suggested that the consultation process undertaken by the Housing Service in order to achieve the savings set out in the business case relating to the introduction of electronic document retrieval and management system (EDRMS) known as Civica was not in accordance with the protocol for managing organisational change.

### **2.2 Response to Unison concerns**

#### **2.2.1 Consultation Process for HaRP Restructure**

Consultation for the Harp restructure has been carried out in accordance with the protocol for managing organisational change section 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

The wider consultation for HaRP implementation was carried out through the HaRP Partnership Meetings from January 2008. The informal consultation on the Harp restructure with Trade Unions was commenced through the Housing Joint Committee meetings from 15 June 2007 to 9 March 2009 (Appendix 1). The minutes of the HGJC meetings attached at appendix 1 demonstrate that the Housing Service sought to provide early information relating to change and discussed with union colleagues at the earliest opportunity on the potential changes.

On 1 December 2008 the formal consultation commenced with managers meeting with both trade unions to inform them about the detailed proposals for the consultation and subsequently meeting with all Housing staff. (Appendix 2)

Throughout the consultation process, a number of meetings have been held with both trade unions and an issues log was created to ensure that all issues were responded to appropriately. (Appendix 3) In addition both trade unions have received written responses to their counter proposals (Appendix 5)

Managers of affected service areas have also met with staff on 1 to 1 basis, in team meetings and in a wider forum as indicated in the consultation timetable (Appendix 4).

#### **2.2.2 Unison Suggestion that “Consultation process was flawed”.**

The minutes of the Housing Group Joint Committee detailed at appendix 1 demonstrate the commitment of senior management within the Housing Service to work in partnership with Union colleagues by meeting regularly and providing advance notification of the action that would be necessary following the introduction of the Civica IT system through the HARP project.

It was clear during the implementation stage of the HaRP system in Housing that the process of staff consultation would be meaningful towards the later part of 2008 when the system had been installed. The implementation timetable started in February 2008 with system “go live” in October 2008. The exercise of identifying, for consultation, specific changes necessary within the

service to achieve both the savings required and assess the areas where there would be a requirement for an increase in resource, could only be commenced after processes had been mapped, tested and staff trained for the system to go live in October 2008.

A detailed report was produced on 1 December 2008 and provided to all members of staff working in the housing service. The report is attached as appendix 2 and sets out the rational for the posts that were identified for deletion. The attachments to that report included a structure chart of the Position as at 1 December 2008 and that proposed following the re-structure. The 'as is' structure chart was condensed onto one table for staff benefit. One error was identified during the first staff meeting and the table was re-issued immediately. All staff were notified of the possible deletion of their posts prior to the staff meeting taking place on 1 December 2008.

### **2.2.3 Unison suggestion that the Housing Service “failed to respond to reasonable requests for information/documentation”.**

The appendices attached to this report are the formal reports that have been provided to Union colleagues and to the staff within the housing service. In addition, as demonstrated by the issues log, information requested by Union colleagues have also been provided. The reports document the rational and feasibility relating to the proposals to delete specific posts within the service.

Unison has made reference to a re-structure within resident services that was concluded on 1 April 2008. This re-structure was consulted on and concluded before commencement of the process of evaluating the changes brought about by the HaRP implementation. Those changes were necessary to improve the performance of the Housing Service specifically within the managing Council houses block of performance indicators for CPA purposes. They changes introduced then were and are key to ensuring an improved housing management service to tenants and leaseholders. The re-structuring introduced management capacity into resident services at a time when Civica was also introduced to improve basic record keeping and filing.

## **3. Conclusion**

The Housing Service fully recognises the difficulty for those staff whose roles is affected by the proposals and has worked to minimise the effect on permanent posts. The outcome has been that out of the 5 employees at risk 3 employees have applied for voluntary severance and their applications have proceeded to stage 7 under that process. 2 remaining staff at risk are being interviewed for vacant posts within the service prior to the redundancy process being implemented.

The Housing service is very committed to working with Unison colleagues and to ensure that early notification of the possibility for change is discussed on a confidential basis in advance of formal processes to deliver change. The service recognises and has complied with all aspects of the protocol for managing organisational change and the Trade Union Recognition and Procedural Agreement.

Gwyneth Allen, Divisional Director of Housing Services  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2009

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank