

Hacked Off!

The Voice of Hackney Workers

Vol. 2. Issue 14.
April 2010

Estate Management Comes Back 'In House'

By Keith Veness, Unison Deputy Convenor for Hackney Homes.

Against a generally gloomy climate, unions in Hackney Homes have one major cause for celebration - as do the tenants and the workforce.

After much pressure and campaigning from trades unionists and tenants groups, Hackney Council and its ALMO Hackney Homes "took the plunge" and decided to end the three privatised housing management contracts and bring all its estate management services back in house from 1st April 2011.

The three companies involved - JSS Pinnacle, Mouchel Parkman & PCHA

Genesis - have had patchy records at best. Whilst Pinnacle has recognised and negotiated with UNISON, Mouchel Parkman does not recognise or negotiate with unions and only accepted UNISON organising its staff "TUPE'd" over from Hackney because it was legally obliged to by legislation governing the transfer of staff.

This "divided management" has never been good for tenants - why should one part of the Borough be managed better than another or be run in a different way? - and the various workforces have been deprived of national terms and conditions such as "flexi time" and access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Also, this contracting out causes a lot of pointless duplication with Hackney Homes employing a whole swathe of staff to monitor contracts when they could be used to

directly manage them.

The monies siphoned off as profits by these three companies can now be put into improving services and provision for the tenants and leaseholders of Hackney.

UNISON stewards in Hackney Homes recognise that there is still a lot of negotiating and discussing to do before this success

becomes a fact in April next year and we are launching a recruitment drive amongst workers in the three organisations, who will need strong support to achieve a fair transfer that protects them.

We are also very committed to ensuring that the providing of direct services is an immediate improvement.

Last year the three private contracts for estate cleaning were bought back in house, resulting in improved pay and conditions for many cleaners, the purchase of better equipment AND a cash saving!

There is no reason why a similar result can't be achieved with the estate management staff.

With this success, the only contracted out parts of estate management will be the concierge service and a proposed "out of hours team".

UNISON is strongly committed to getting these last few services back in house as well.

Overall this is a good success for trades unionism and for our tenants and residents.

For many staff and tenants, 1st April 2011 cannot come fast enough.



Back 'In house' Clock House, Stamford Hill Neighbourhood Office

HACKNEY



**Room 40 Town Hall
Mare street E8 1EA
Tel: 020 8356 4062/71**

Election of Branch Chair

Hackney Unison is seeking nominations to the position of Branch Chair as this key position is currently vacant.

Nomination papers inside.

Nominations must be received no later than 5.00 pm on Friday 14th May 2010

If more than one nomination is received then an election will be held at a General Meeting of all Hackney Unison members on:

Tuesday 18th May 2010

at

12.00 – 2.00 pm

in

**Council Chambers
Hackney Town Hall
Mare Street**

Job Matching Proposals Received

Unison has been asked to consider an alteration to the established job matching process as part of the Performance Strategy review as management believe that the current procedure will not best serve to maximize the opportunity for our members to secure work in the proposed structure. The request has been made on the basis that the Council is proposing to move away from the current approach to policy and performance work whereby staff carry out specific and specialized roles to a more generic structure in which staff will be required to undertake a wider range of and more general duties in a defined field (i.e. customer insight or policy) across differing departments and directorates of the authority.

As such the Council feels that the use of the current job matching process, which matches old and new job descriptions, may result in staff being unnecessarily displaced and ultimately dismissed because they will be matched essentially on the tasks they currently carry out rather than the core competencies required to carry out work in a defined field.

The current process, brought in towards the end of 2008, provides all staff with an objective and easily measurable way of understanding how their roles compare with those proposed as part of a restructure. It is essentially the authority's most important and widely used selection method for redundancy.

Previously the council had not used a uniformed system or provided any readily available written guidance on how the process worked. Requests for job matching results to be released or re-evaluated were often rejected. This in turn led to numerous individual and collective disputes. Since the introduction of the new process the number of disputes resulting fro job matching has significantly dropped and any problems which do occur are normally resolved as part of individual consultation process expressly because the process is now transparent. easily understood and can be verified against a written procedure.

The process also allows staff - who may have been selected for redundancy because of grading differences – to challenge the grading of a proposed role in a new structure, indeed it is the only method accepted by the Council for doing so and therefore an extremely important protection for our members.

The proposals received late last month are based on a pool system whereby staff are assigned a particular pool based on the competencies required to undertake their deleted post. They are then matched with the generic jobs requiring those pooled competencies in the new structure. These are just proposals however the implications for either adopting or rejecting them will be significant and therefore **it is important that members look at and feedback on the proposals.**

Unison will not agree to any inferior terms and conditions on behalf of our members.

The proposals are available on e-mail from Matthew Waterfall and hard copies are in the branch office.

 Hackney 

General Meeting

Tuesday 18 May

12 - 2 pm

Council Chambers

The meeting has been called to elect a chairperson and discuss management proposals to alter the restructuring process

Time off has been requested from management Refreshments provided

Election Meltdown



Readers will be forgiven for being a little overwhelmed by all the talk of elections at the moment and we're sorry to have to add to the election overload by announcing a couple of elections of our own!

As the general election momentum builds and with all three parties vying for the centre ground Hackney Unison must also hold an election for the position of Chairperson.

The position has become vacant following the barring of the previous Chair, Brian Debus from holding union office.

The chair is an extremely important role and the Branch cannot operate without one.

The chairperson is responsible for upholding the rules of Unison at branch level and also for chairing (as the name would suggest) all branch committee and general Unison meetings.

Hackney Unison is also seeking nominations to the following posts: **Publicity Officer, Welfare Officer, Education Officer and Membership Officer** all of which were not filled at this years annual general meeting.

Any member of the branch can stand for any of the positions however they must be nominated and seconded by two fellow members. If you are interested you can ask members in you section to nominate you.

Nominations must be received at the branch office no later than 5.00 pm on Friday 14th May.

If any of the positions are contested then an election will be held at the **General Meeting** being held on the **18th May** in the **Town Hall**. Trade union work is extremely rewarding and offers members the opportunity to gain new skills in advocacy, negotiation policy and understanding legislation, whilst at the same time playing an active role in making our union branch here in Hackney stronger.

We already represent nearly 60% of all permanent staff working in local government in the borough, that's higher than any other local government branch of any union in London and by working together we can improve on this.

We appreciate how busy everyone is and how hard our members work to provide the people of Hackney with the first rate services they receive but the coming few years promise to be difficult for everyone working in the public sector whoever wins the general election on 6th May.

This is why it is so important that members play an active role in their branch so that we are organised and in a good position to stave off attacks on jobs if and when they come.

For further information about becoming a union officer, the training available or what the role entails please contact Matthew Waterfall on 0208 356 4062 or via e-mail at matthew.waterfall@hackney.gov.uk.

 **Vote in UNISON's
SGE election**

Service group executives

What are the service group executives?

The service group executives represent the area of employment in which you work: local government, health, police and justice, higher education, community, energy, water, the environment and transport.

As a member of UNISON, you can stand for election to your service group executive or as a delegate to the group conference.

SGE elections in 2010

Elections for a number of service group executives take place in April and May 2010.

How do I vote?

All UNISON members eligible to vote are automatically sent a ballot paper. Your ballot paper will come with a freepost envelope in which to return it.

If you have not received a ballot paper by 20 April - and you think you should have done - please phone the election helpline on 0845 355 0845.

Key dates

12 April: Despatch of ballot papers

20 April: Start of members' ballot helpline

11 May: Close of members' ballot helpline

14 May: Deadline for receipt of ballot papers (5pm)

9 June: Results announced

The successful candidates will take office following the close of National Delegate Conference 2010.

Election queries

Contact the Member Liaison Unit at UNISON head office in Mabledon Place on 020 7551 1312 or email elections@unison.co.uk.

[uk](http://unison.co.uk)

Website Whiz Required

Hackney Unison agreed at the annual general meeting to set up a website for the branch and so we are seeking members who have experience in developing websites to help us in this task.

Volunteers will receive any assistance they require and the branch has ample funds to provide any software or hardware that may be needed. To find out how you can help please contact the Branch.



Hackney Local Government Branch

Nominations for Branch Officers

Hackney Unison Branch invite nominations for the following Branch Officers posts:

Chair, Publicity Officer, Welfare Officer, Education Officer and Membership Officer

If you wish to nominate or second a Unison Branch member for any or all of these posts you need to complete the form below.

Only fully paid up members of Unison can stand, nominate or second a candidate. All positions can be held by job sharers.

Officers Position you wish to nominate to

(Please print clearly)

Name of Proposed Candidate

Candidates Unison Membership Number

Name of Person Proposing

Proposer's Unison Membership Number

Name of Person Seconding

Seconders Unison Membership Number

Signature of Candidate

NB: please print all names clearly using block capitals. If any of the information requested above is not provided or is unclear, the nomination will not be accepted.

Please return completed forms to Hackney Unison, Room 40, Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA, **no later than 5.00 pm Friday 14th May 2010**

