

Special MC Meeting	Minutes
Date	28 July 2015
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Attendance: Mike Ford (MF) (Chair), Lorraine Isaac (LI), Elizabeth Henderson-Sambell (EHS), Robina Fellows (RF) Malcolm Bush (MB) Chenjerai Shire (CS) Joan Clay (JC) Peter Humble (PH).

Apologies: Claire Winceza (CW)

Absent: Silva Kirk (SK) Darren Roderick (DR).

Present: Francis Owusu-Sekyere (FOS) Estate Manager, Carol O'Shea (COS) Minutes.

Meeting Started at 6.30pm

It was noted this is a special meeting to discuss organisational restructure and contracting out cleaning services therefore no previous minutes will be considered.

1. Proposed Staff Restructure:

1a. MF opened the meeting with brief introduction and explained the need to convene this special meeting outside the normal MC time table. He invited LI who is a member of HR-Sub Committee to explain why the Sub-Committee is recommending staff restructuring.

1b. LI told members there have been on-going staff issues which the manager in conjunction with the HR Sub-Committee have tried to resolve but to no satisfactory conclusion. She said she may not be able to disclose detailed information about individual staff members due to data protection/ confidentiality. There have been some occasions where joint meetings between HR and Finance Sub-Committees have been convened in an attempt to resolve disputes among staff members,

misconduct and indiscipline. Sadly one member of staff had to be suspended for two weeks and face full disciplinary action resulting in a written warning with 12 pages of disciplinary hearing minutes plus a similar number of pages preparation notes. Other staff members have also appeared before the sub committees, a lot of time has been spent by both HR and Finance Sub-Committees and the Estate Manager and we feel this is now becoming untenable. LI added that we have been in contact with our HR consultants who have agreed organisational restructuring of staff and looking at how services are provided can be beneficial in such circumstances.

EHS in her contribution Looked at financial implications of numerous staff sickness absences going on at present and also the fact that the Co-op still have to pay staff member/s when they are suspended, this obviously is not sustainable. She added the current situation is not what anybody will wish for after giving people jobs with reasonable pay and conditions.

FOS added to EHS' comment and explained the current staff issues are not a failure in management but rather some staff members playing the system. For example, the moment you start performance management, staff begins to take sick leave and they still have to be paid meanwhile we need to engage temps to continue service provision. One staff member went off sick for 5 weeks with stress whilst another one is currently off sick in the last two weeks and is continuing. We are a small organisation with limited resources and cannot afford prolong sicknesses and I am very worried about the situation.

LI commented that we like to employ our own staff; this is our intention, values and principle. However, staff relations have broken down. FOS has tried to work with staff to no avail. She hinted there could be another disciplinary proceeding with another staff member this brings unnecessary workload on FOS and COS causing them stress which is not good for their health. The Staff Sub Committee has advised FOS and COS to take one day a week off for stress whenever necessary.

JC asked what will happen to the resident caretaker position under the restructuring. FOS answered the position currently does not represent value for money that is the reason Camden no longer have resident caretakers. He explained almost about 80% of the Resident Caretaker's duties is cleaning and this can be provided more efficiently and cheaper by having dedicated cleaners. He therefore proposed Part-time Resident Handyman instead.

JC further asked whether the Resident Caretaker will be made homeless under the circumstance and how will the Part-time Resident Handyman's rent payment work out. FOS explained the property will not be taken from the Resident Caretaker as he will be still offered Estate Cleaner position. However, he will be responsible for his rent payment. In the case of the Part-time Resident Handyman, it is proposed the organisation will subsidise 50% rent payment. JC finally asked if jobs will be advertised or not. FOS answered that new roles will be offered to staff as alternative employment first with a choice of redundancy.

MF advised letters will be sent to staff to explain the reason/s for restructuring followed by group and individual consultation meetings if Management Committee members agree and vote for the restructuring to go ahead. The Resident Caretaker

including other staff members who will be affected will have a choice of a new role or redundancy package and the organisation will respect their decision. JC at this point asked if the restructuring will affect all staff or not. MF answered the proposal at this stage is all staff except the Estate Manager. However, this will need reassessing given that we want the estate office to continue with the opening hours from Monday to Friday. EHS added the restructuring makes sense given that there has been reduction in caretaker duties on the estate since Camden has taken over some of the roles our caretakers used to carry out. She however emphasised the need for a resident staff member on site at least to assist our OAPS. It was noted the Resident Caretaker is not handy and therefore could not be offered the role of Resident Handyman, JC asked, what about training for the caretaker? FOS answered training has been offered for him to shadow the Handyman but he did not take it up.

Change of roles proposed under the restructuring are as follows:

- Estate Manager – no changes
- Estate Officer – under assessment
- Housing Administrator – hours to be reduced from 20 to 10
- Resident Caretaker – to be changed to Estate Cleaner
- Par-time Estate Cleaner – to be changed to full-time
- Caretaker Handyman – to be changed to Resident Caretaker Handyman.

MF asked if any member/s have further questions or need clarification on the restructuring and none was raised. He then asked members to cast their votes either 'For' or 'Against' the restructuring by raising their hands and members unanimously voted for the restructuring to go ahead.

MF at this point informed members he has moved out of our estate and will leave the meeting earlier at some point. LI being Vice Chair will now act as Chair until next AGM.

2. Proposed Contract out of cleaning and grounds maintenance services:

2a. The meeting noted four quotes from different companies namely: Carter & Faraday, Hi-Spec Services, Julius Rutherford and Lloyds Services were sent to all Management Committee members earlier before this meeting to enable them make an informed decision.

2b. Members were informed the quotes received is for both cleaning and grounds maintenance services as the current grounds maintenance contract comes to an end on 31st August 2015. There was no intention to invite a quote from the current contractor, Klassic Maintenance as residents have some concerns with their service provision.

2c. Prices from quotations:

- Carter & Faraday - £71,345 per year
- Hi-Spec Services - £66,505
- Julius Rutherford - £57,922
- Lloyds Services - £50,225

2d. FOS tendered a paper with details of current costs in providing both the cleaning and grounds maintenance services, total cost is **£65,508**.

2e. Detailed discussion by members – LI introduced the reason why both Finance and HR Sub Committees considered contracting out cleaning services will be a better option at their joint meeting. She reminded members that grounds maintenance has always been provided by external contractor therefore the emphasis of the recommendation here is estate and block cleaning services. She told members this is being considered as part of the restructuring exercise to curb the staff problems and for better service provision.

EHS added the only option to deal with misconduct is to suspend the staff member and investigate, this is not cost effective as the suspended staff gets paid and replacement have to be put in place for the suspended period. Furthermore, some staff members have resulted to sickness absences which may not be genuine but cannot be challenged as long as they provide doctor's certificate. She reiterated Both Finance and HR sub-Committees have spent too much time dealing with staff issues and allude to the fact that she had to spend 11 hours in one week on this not even mentioning the numerous hours LI has put in. She brought members' attention to the fact that cleaning on the estate has gone down due to staff issues.

EHS reminded members that residents were dissatisfied with Camden for poor services, the reason they came together to form the Co-operative. We should therefore be mindful that the Co-operative can fold and services return to Camden if we fail to provide resident with satisfactory services. JC commented that it is sad staff issues have brought us to this state whilst RF expressed her surprise at the whole events. Members at this point wanted to know what will happen to staff whose roles will be taken over by external contractors if the proposal is agreed.

LI explained that under the proposal, affected staff will be TUPE to the company that wins the contract. The company will train them and they will be permanent staff we would not have to deal with staff sickness absences which distracts cleaning services on the estate, this practically will affect the two estate cleaners after the restructure. The Co-operative will then end up with the management of four staff. However, our contractors are answerable to us.

MF advised committee members are being asked to discuss and vote on two proposals, these are: whether or not to contract out and who among the four companies to go with if we agree with the first proposal.

PH suggested that it might be a good idea to change present system to what is being proposed. CS commented there could be problems contracting out services, judging from his experience contractors do not give you what you want and do not follow orders which quite often bring management problems/ issues and therefore prefer in-house staff to contractors. MF suggested if agreed, we should go for short term contract and monitor. He told members his vote therefore will go for short term contract out.

CS felt it is important to go for 1 year contract if this is to be done to see how it will work. MB expressed his surprised with the whole situation and commented if that is the right thing, then we have to do it. EHS advised on the need to protect the

organisation else there will be no more Co-op, JC agreed if services go back to Camden, it will not be the same.

LI chairing the meeting at this point asked members to vote on the motion of whether to contract out or not by show of hands. Members unanimously voted for both cleaning services and grounds maintenance to be contracted out to one company. MF remarked that though he voted for the motion, he did it with extreme reservation.

3. Quotes: Members went through all the four quotes thoroughly and made various comments and assessments. It was noted CS has provided critical written analysis of all the quotes which members were grateful for, this was considered alongside the actual quotes. RF expressed her first preference was Lloyds followed by Rutherford. JC acknowledged Lloyds are the cheapest but not necessarily the best as their quote doesn't provide some vital information. LI expressed similar sentiments with Lloyds' quote and noted they have failed to provide vital information such as Health & Safety policy, How they vet their staff, whether they support London living wage, no company history and current organisations they provide service for, on a whole, not adequate information provided although the cheapest.

FOS at this point drew members' attention to the need for us to obtain maximum information during this tendering process to help make an informed decision to comply with our rules and Camden internal audit. EHS commented that quotations are not work specifications and wanted members to bear that in mind as well. JC noted Rutherford's minimum wage as £8.50 per hour conforming to London living wage and also a very comprehensive quote with containing all vital information, her preference therefore was Rutherford. PH, LI and EHS agreed with JC for Rutherford as first choice. LI further commented their quotation overall gives good picture of the company for example, current high profile organisations they provide services for, their process of vetting staff and overall cautious approach to security which will make residents feel safe.

MB advised he has not had enough time to go through the quotes and therefore cannot provide comments, he will communicate by email. Members also looked at Hi-Spec services quote which was equally acceptable but more expensive than that of Rutherford. The quote of Cater & Faraday was considered to be the most expensive and over our allocated budget. EHS drew attention to the fact that all quotations have been based on Monday to Saturday without Sunday cover and asked whether members are comfortable with that. Members after deliberation agreed the need for 5 hours Sunday cleaning same as that of Saturday. FOS was asked to progress this with the company that will be chosen. EHS further commented there is a possible saving of £7,000 on Rutherford's quotation compare with current cost and this represents value for money. LI asked for further comments/questions and none came up, she therefore asked members to vote on which quotation they prefer by raising their hands. Members unanimously voted for Julius Rutherford to provide the services for initial 1 year as a trial period.

JC at this point asked what can be done if Julius Rutherford insists on a two year contract instead of one. FOS responded there will be penalty clauses in the contract for service failures, however, we are offering the contract and will dictate the contract

length. LI advised we hire a lawyer to advise us before we sign a contract if there are any complication. FOS agreed and remarked we will try Camden legal should the need arise. LI assured members the situation will be reviewed at the end of the contract and appropriate measures will be taken.

EHS noted Rutherfordord also undertake abseiling and advise if we can talk to them in future for the window cleaning of the towers. FOS advised as TMO, we can negotiate with Camden to take on more services but we need to obtain the mandate from our members first and this is something we can do at our AGM.

AOB:

LI asked MB if he would like to be on the panel in August to meet with staff on group and subsequent individual consultations. MB obliged. EHS was asked the same question although she had initial reservation she agreed. Members concluded MB and EHS to form the panel with FOS attending the consultation meetings to take the minutes.

LI was concerned residents are not actively participating in regeneration matters and wanted the office to encourage residents to give planning consultations feedback to the office for discussion at our AGM. She also suggested inviting non- Co-op residents with interest in the regeneration generation to our AGM. FOS advised planning permission has not been submitted by the Regeneration team yet, once done residents will be written to for their comments. FOS expressed concerned about non-Co-op residents using Abbey Road Housing Co-op to get their views across since they have their own right to do so. He cautioned the Co-operative is not here to assist any individuals to advance their political/self-interest and must always remain politically neutral.

Meeting finished at 8.30pm

Dated of next normal meeting: 8th September 2015

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Print Name _____
Management Committee Member

Print Name _____
Management Committee Member

Dated _____

Dated _____