UNISON
Greater London

1st Floor
Congress House
Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3LS

Tel: 0800 0 857 857
Email:Greaterlondonregion@unison.co.uk
www.unison.org.uk/london

22 May 2020

Dear Mr Tuckley,

RE: Tower Rewards

Thank you for your response dated 18 May 2020 to Fran Allton.

I am replying as the Regional Manager as Fran is currently on leave.

As you acknowledge Tower Hamlets UNISON Branch officials took the decision to suspend industrial action, even though at that time the Council had not lifted the threat of imposition of new "Tower Rewards" contracts, in order that we could all concentrate on supporting our community through the Covid 19 crisis.

This crisis has forced us all to look again, at just how important the services Local Authorities provide are; what are the most essential of services; and indeed for Local Authorities and society as a whole just who are the most essential workers.

It remains the case that it would seem perverse to impose new contracts by the means of sacking and re-engaging the same workers whose efforts over these difficult months have rightly been praised.

You acknowledge that the vast majority of the workforce have not signed up to accept the new contracts, consistent with the fact that members of every trade union rejected the final proposals.

UNISON has engaged in discussions on Tower Rewards throughout the consultation process and we have already expressed our willingness to seek to explore a resolution to our Trade Dispute at ACAS.

It is disappointing that even though it is clear the workforce have not agreed to the new contracts you have declined to delay implementation on 6th July, nor to extend the period over which UNISON can lawfully take industrial action.

Nevertheless we remain willing to explore the possibility of resolving our dispute through the auspices of ACAS.

We would propose to focus on two key areas, the significance of which has been further highlighted in the current crisis.

The first is the proposal in Tower Rewards to increase pay scales solely for higher level grades when it is precisely many of the lower paid groups of workers who have proved so essential in the current crisis. We have previously made proposals to address this which could form the basis for discussion.

The second is around severance. Your Corporate team have already shared with trade unions the expectation that there may be significant levels of further restructuring as a result of the current crisis. Staff cannot accept the notion that having worked tirelessly through this difficult period they may then face redundancy situations on significantly worse terms than currently exist.

In view of the deadline of 6th July for imposition of new contracts by sacking and re-engaging that the Council continue to adhere to I look forward to your response by no later than close of business on Wednesday 27 May.

Yours Sincerely



Helen Reynolds
Regional Manager
UNISON

Cc. John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets
Fran Allton, Regional Organiser, UNISON