

**Draft Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at the Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham at 2.30pm**

**Present:**

**Employer's side:** Councillors D.B. Allen and I.J. Henderson

**Staff side:** A. Inkpen and M. Thorne (Unison)

**Officers Present:** E. Orchard (Head of Human Resources) and H. Powell (Temporary Policy & Democratic Assistant)

**LJCC49. Election of Chairman for the Meeting**

**Resolved** that A. Inkpen be elected as Chairperson for the meeting.

**Mr Inkpen in the Chair.**

**LJCC50. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from D. Burbidge (Chief Executive), D. Jones (UNISON) and from Councillor J. Hartless.

**LJCC51. Minutes**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Consultative Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Joint Consultative Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**LJCC52. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**LJCC53. One Council for Wiltshire Update**

E. Orchard gave a verbal update.

A summary of the update is given below:

- The recruitment process for senior management posts is close to being agreed;

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- The Council has been advised on who should be included in ring-fencing. This will be decided using each post's *Hay* scores;
- The likely recruitment of five WCC directors leaves one displaced county director and the four district chief executives;
- It is still to be agreed whether to advertise these senior vacancies as internal or external, with Central Local Government preferring the latter option;
- County has now released the draft staffing regulations and the districts have been given two weeks to consult;
- A report on the early amalgamation of Electoral Services has now been accepted by the Joint Implementation Team. Because of its I.T. resources North Wilts will be the department's location for the time being;
- With early amalgamated teams there are unresolved issues over who is technically the employer, and thus who has the right to dismiss etc. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) will meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 to discuss this;
- The JCC has revised its terms of reference to include any matter that affects all five authorities within its remit;
- Unison expressed concern that at the most recent meeting of the JCC WCC's chief executive's reports on structure and recruitment were not mentioned, despite appearing on the web two days later. The HEAD OF HR later apologised to the trade union side, giving the reason that the structure and recruitment process of Wiltshire Council would be decided by Members and not by managers;
- Unison reported that when asked to what extent these reports had been informed by the transition's various Task and Working Groups, the chief executive's answer was, "not at all". He did not consider it appropriate to be proposing radical changes during the transition – this should be done by the new authority;
- Unison agreed that this approach was logical, but felt it should be communicated more clearly to staff, many of whom would be relieved to hear it;
- Unison expressed concern that the potential for chaos on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 is huge, and that greater clarity and consistency on what needs to be in place by then is required.

**Resolved** that the update be noted.

**LJCC54. Pay and Rewards Update**

E. Orchard gave a verbal update on the Pay and Rewards Project.

**Resolved** that the update be noted.

**LJCC55. Review of the Harassment Code of Practice**

Consideration was given to Report No. 7 (circulated with the Agenda), which informed the Committee that a review of the Harassment Code of Practice had been carried out and that charges had been made.

Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- Officers are confident the Code of Practice is more robust and user-friendly than before; and
- Unison welcomed the new Code and hoped it would be used as a model by the new Wiltshire Council.

**Resolved** that the Local Joint Consultative Committee agree the revised Harassment Code of Practice for Employees and Elected Members.

**LJCC56. Review of the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures**

Consideration was given to Report No. 8 (circulated with the Agenda) which informed the Committee that a review of the Council's Disciplinary Procedure had been undertaken. Following the recent changes at senior management level it had been necessary to review the levels at which disciplinary decisions can be made.

Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- Due to recent changes in management there is a need to move the power to dismiss further down the management structure;
- Officers assured the Committee that efforts would always be made to include an experienced manager on any disciplinary panels;
- The Members' Appeals Committee remains;
- The measures will hopefully be used sparingly, but there is a need for a robust policy; and
- Unison support the changes.

**Resolved** that the Local Joint Consultative Committee agree the revised Disciplinary Procedure and recommend its adoption to Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee.

**LJCC57. Revised Redundancy Severance Arrangements**

Consideration was given to Report No. 9 (circulated with the Agenda) which informed the Committee of changes to redundancy severance arrangements.

Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- The changes have to be agreed by County before districts can implement them;
- The changes will probably come into effect across all the authorities on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008;
- The changes are sympathetic to the fact that, for some, finishing work on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 may be preferable to finishing a few months later;
- The four districts have agreed not to respond to the changes until they can give a unified response;
- Unison welcomed the need for harmony across the districts in this area, and will give their formal response no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 (Personnel, Licensing & Admin Committee meeting);
- Unison will be looking to address the issue of protection for staff offered lower grade work as an alternative to retirement/redundancy;
- Unison point out that lower paid staff benefit least from this policy, but acknowledge that there are no easy answers to that issue;
- Unison suggest that to ensure the policy is implemented in the same way by all five authorities, some clarification of terms would be helpful; and
- Remuneration packages tend to affect organisations with lease cars, bonus schemes etc., which do not apply to NWDC.

**Resolved** that the Local Joint Consultative Committee is asked to recommend that Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee approve the proposed harmonised severance arrangements, as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

**LJCC58. The Impact of Secondments and Extra Project Work on NWDC's Existing Services**

A verbal update was given by Unison.

Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- Unison estimate that 20% of departments' resources are being directed towards re-organisation. Due to extra effort from staff this is probably having no effect on service to the public, but it is not sustainable in the long term;

- Demands on staff from Members are only likely to increase as vesting day approaches;
- Managers were initially reassured that a pot of money would be available to fund the increase in workload, but this has not materialised;
- Haemorrhaging of staff is greater at the lower end of the scale, particularly in administrative roles;
- In response the Head of Finance & Resources has invoiced the transition budget for more ad hoc staff than initially allocated;
- The Human Resources Transition Group will look at the figures on temporary staff/secondments at their next meeting;
- Human Resources have organised four training dates entitled “Embracing Change”, providing a fun day aimed at encouraging approaching change with a positive outlook;
- Training days offering help with CV-writing and recruitment training will also be provided; and
- 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of the corporate training budget has now been allocated to independent department training. This will allow departments to fund their own training where they see the need for it.

**Resolved** that the update be noted.

**LJCC59. Any Other Business**

There was general agreement that local consultative Committees such as this one still perform a valuable function. Unison branches in other authorities have more mixed opinions on their value.