

Democratic Services
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Draft Extract Minutes

Meeting of : Joint Consultative Forum
Meeting held in : Committee Room 1, The Council House, Bourne Hill, Salisbury
Date : 28 April 2006

153. Minutes from the Health & Safety Committee:

The members considered the minutes from the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 7th March 2006 together with the Working Time Regulations Agreement (both previously circulated).

The UNISON Branch Organiser informed the Forum that the unions had been prepared to sign up to the daily rest section of the agreement on the basis that staff who did regular on call work were satisfied with it. Those staff were concerned that abiding by the regulations would have a negative impact on their working patterns and therefore the agreement was preferable to those staff. However, he stated that the agreement was subject to review and that if the situation changed in the future, UNISON would want statutory rights to daily breaks reinstated.

Resolved –

1. That the minutes be noted.
2. That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Working Time Regulations Agreement be adopted.

154. Work Life Balance Policy

The Forum considered the previously circulated draft policy from the Workforce Planning Manager.

The UNISON Branch Organiser informed the Forum that generally he considered this to be a very positive policy but that there were one or two issues in relation to work life balance which needed further consideration. These issues, such as updating the flexi-time scheme and flexible retirement arrangements, were to be discussed further in the future but that it had been agreed that the adoption of the policy should not be delayed pending these discussions.

Councillor Miss Tomlinson added that the issue of flexible retirement had been raised during the scrutiny review of recruitment and retention which she had led, and the review group would be recommending that this was implemented.

The Head of Personnel and Training informed the Forum that the Workforce Planning Manager would be leaving the Council in the near future and thanked her for all the work she had done to further the Council's work in this important area. She also informed members that her post would be filled by the current Recruitment and Retention Officer and wished her every success in this appointment.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



Resolved – that it be recommended to Cabinet that the draft Work Life Balance Policy be adopted, subject to the re-wording of paragraph 8 relating to appeals, to clarify that a bar had not been placed on staff appealing above level three of the grievance procedure, and that level three was in fact the final stage.

155. Update on the Local Government Pension Scheme:

The Forum considered the previously circulated statement from UNISON Regional Secretary on the above issue together with a paper from the ODPM. A joint Statement on the Local Government Pension Scheme was circulated at the meeting.

The UNISON Branch Organiser informed the Forum that a strike had been undertaken on 28th March but that a subsequent strike planned for 25th April had been postponed. He explained that although the dispute was not yet resolved, fruitful negotiations were ongoing. He informed the Forum that the National Employers had agreed that 50% of the savings from the abolition of the “rule of 85” would be re-invested in protecting the rights of existing staff and any surplus could then be used for scheme improvements for new starters. He stated that UNISON were content to postpone further action on the basis of the joint statement and hoped that the result of discussions of detail would lead to agreement. The unions hoped that existing staff would be given full protection and that there would be money left to be reinvested for new starters. He said that in the NHS the framework agreement had agreed that new starters could still retire at 60 but would be required to make greater contributions towards their pensions and UNISON considered this to be reasonable.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

156. Matters, if any, which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency:

The Head of Personnel and Training informed members of the Forum that the Council had achieved the accreditation “Investors in People” for the second time following its recent assessment. She congratulated everyone in the Council on this award as it covered the entire organisation. She informed the Forum that the assessor made very positive comments about the work that the Council had undertaken and stated that, should the Council have put itself forward for the extended award, out of a possible score of four, the Council would have achieved level two in all areas, level three in some areas and level four in others, which was very encouraging.

She commented that there were one or two learning points in the assessment and the Council would be keen to learn from this as it had done in the past.

Agreed – that the Investors in People assessment report be sent to Cabinet for information.