

Agenda Item 17

Democratic Services
Salisbury District Council, Bourne Hill
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Minutes

Meeting of : Joint Consultative Forum
Meeting held in : Committee Room 1, The Council House, Bourne Hill, Salisbury
Date : Friday 29 September 2006
Time : 10.00am

Present:

Chairman:
Rick Wells (UNISON) – Chairman

Councillors:

Councillor A J A Brown-Hovelt (Vice Chairman) and Councillor Paul Sample

Staff Side:

Jenny Marshall (TGWU), Jane Mitchell (UNISON) and Joan Smith (UNISON)

Officers in Attendance:

Anne McConkey (Head of People and Organisational Development), Andrea Glover (Workforce Planning Manager), Lucy Freeman (Employee Relations Officer), Les Wright (Head of IT), Lisa Moore (DSU), and Mark Wareham (UNISON Branch Organiser).

Apologies:

Councillor Donald Culver

179. Minutes:

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



180. Declaration of Interests:

There were none.

181. Minutes from the Health and Safety Committee:

The Forum members considered the minutes from the last meeting of the Health and Safety Committee on 5 June 2006.

The Forum noted that minute 91 referred to the Access to Council Services – Customer Index Draft Report, which had been withdrawn from the agenda of the previous Forum meeting, and was due to come back to a later meeting. As the report had not been included on the agenda of this meeting, the Forum noted that it would still like to see the report before it went to Cabinet.

Resolved – That the minutes of the Health and Safety meeting held on 5th June 2006 be noted.

182. Office Centralisation Project – Standing Item:

The Chairman informed the Forum that there was no new information at present.

Resolved – that the update be noted.

183. Capability Procedure – Personnel and Training Services June 2006:

The Head of People and Organisational Development gave an overview of the Employee Relation Managers report to the Forum, informing members that the report was a revision to the current version. The main aim of the report was to simplify the document as it had been found that people were shying away from using the previous version, due to it being too complex. It had also been an opportunity to take into consideration new legislation on disability and statutory grievance issues, as well as being able to establish whether there were any crossovers between this policy and other policies within the council, eliminating any confusion as to which policy should be used.

The Forum thanked the Employee Relations Manager for the report; it was felt that it was an excellent working document, which was easy to understand.

Resolved – that the Capability Procedure be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

184. Instructions on the Acceptable Use of Salisbury District Council ICT Equipment and Systems;

The Head of IT gave an overview of the policy to the Forum, informing members that although some guidance was available on the Internet at present, the need for a better procedure was long over due. The policy now included the introduction of the concept that a reasonable amount of personal use of the ITC equipment outside working hours was now acceptable. A glossary of useful IT Buzzwords had been included to enable users to more easily understand IT terms and phrases.

The policy had already been circulated to Service Unit Heads with the recommendation that they communicate the contents to team leaders within their units. Once finalised it will be available on the intranet.

Resolved: that the policy be recommended to Cabinet for approval

185. Pensions Update:

The Head of People and Organisational Development gave an update to the Forum, informing members that following discussions between the trade unions and local government employers, the Government had introduced further amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which provides additional protections from the phasing out of the 85-year rule for existing scheme members. The extended protection provisions were:-

- An additional 18 months protection to 31 March 2008 for all existing members at 30 September 2006
- To extend transitional protection from 31 March 2013 to 31 March 2016 for those existing members at 30 September 2006 who will be 60 or over by 31 March 2016
- To extend transitional protection from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2020 for those existing members at 30 September 2006 who will be 60 or over and meet the 85-year rule between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2020, using tapering reduction factors.

It is understood that, following the judicial review on 18/19th September 2006 concerning the removal of the 85-year rule from the LGPS, the judge has found against UNISON and in favour of the Secretary of State on each of the questions raised. He has found that the rule of 85 is discriminatory and that its

retention without objective justification under the derogation within the European Employment Directive is not permissible. It is understood that there is to be no appeal.

The UNISON Branch Organiser informed the Forum that the outcome had been disappointing, and in terms of comparison with Civil Service and Teachers Pensions, it still did not come close. UNISON had said that if there were no more changes they would move an industrial action ballot.

Resolved – that the Update be noted.

186. TUPE Protocol – Draft Report:

The Head of People and Organizational Development informed the Forum that the solicitors who were advising on the Housing Stock Transfer had produced the report. There were still some issues of detail to agree but in principle, both SDC Management and the trades unions considered the document to be helpful. Once detailed consultation had been completed, it was planned to ask Cabinet to approve the draft protocol. In order to avoid delay in implementation of the protocol should the Housing Stock Transfer be approved, JCF were asked to approve the draft in principle so that, once consultation was finalised, the draft could be presented direct to Cabinet.

The Forum felt that the draft report was easy to read and very useful and agreed the draft.

Resolved - that the Protocol, once finalised through consultation with People and Organisational Development, the Trade Unions and Service Unit Heads, be presented to Cabinet for approval.

187. Staffing Establishment List and Equalities Monitoring – standing item:

The Workforce Planning Manager gave an update to the Forum, informing members that there had not been a huge fluctuation in figures since the last update in June. A significant amount of work had been undertaken with the Service Unit Heads and the Accounts Team to finalise the baseline establishment figures.

Headcount figures were confirmed as 760 staff with contracted hours. In addition, the Council currently employ 128 staff employed on a casual basis, primarily within the Community Initiatives Unit. It was also noted that staff turnover had decreased during the last quarter.

Statistics on ethnicity showed that there had not been a great deal of variance over the last quarter. Shortfalls remain against BVPI targets in the percentage of employees with a disability. Work is underway to address this within current recruitment processes. Age and gender distribution remained fairly static since the last quarter.

Resolved – that the Update be noted

188. Recruitment and Retention Update – Standing item:

The Workforce Planning Manager gave an update to the Forum, explaining that the recent work of the Recruitment and Retention Scrutiny Group had been taken on board, and that the action plan was now being implemented. Recent actions include work with IT to improve online recruitment processes and the investigation into the feasibility of apprenticeships.

A further update on actions will be provided at the January meeting of the JCF.

Resolved – that the Update be noted

189. Date of the Next Meeting:

Resolved – that the next meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum be held on Friday 26th January 2007 at 10.00 am in the SCS Training Room at The Depot, Churchfields.

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

The Unison Branch Organiser noted there had been no representation from the Labour party for some time, and asked that the issue be investigated.

The Chairman requested that the four representatives from the Members side be contacted to establish whether a change to the meeting day and time would be preferred, in order for there to be full representation at future Forum meetings.

Resolved – that the Members be contacted and asked for their preferred choice of meeting day and time.

The Forum discussed the possibility of increasing the membership to include a representative from the Independent Group.

The Chairman asked that this be looked into, along with the possibility of updating the constitution. He requested that a copy of the current constitution be circulated to all members of the Forum so that any suggestions could be forwarded to Democratic Services, to consider and comment on in good time before the next agenda was sent out, and that the findings be brought to the next meeting.

Resolved - that the current constitution be circulated to all members of the Forum in advance of the next meeting

Meeting closed at 11.20 am