

Agenda Item 19

Democratic Services
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Minutes

Meeting of : Joint Consultative Forum
Meeting held in : SCS Training Room, The Depot, Churchfields, Salisbury
Date : Friday 26 January 2007
Time : 10.00 am

Present

Chairman

Rick Wells (UNISON) – Chairman.

Councillors

Councillor Anthony Brown-Hovelt (Vice Chairman) and Councillors Don Culver, Mrs Elizabeth Chettleburgh (standing in for Cllr Miss Murial Tomlinson) and Ian Tomes (standing in for Cllr Mrs Iris Evans).

Staff Side

Jane Mitchell (UNISON) and Joan Smith (UNISON)

Officers in Attendance

Gavin Brooks (UNISON South West Regional Officer), Karen Gard (Employee Relations Manager), Andrea Glover (Workforce Planning Manager), Lucy Freeman (Recruitment & Retention Officer), Steve Milton (Democratic Services) and Mark Wareham (UNISON Branch Organiser)

Apologies

Councillor Mrs Iris Evans, Councillor Miss Murial Tomlinson, David Crook (Acting Chief Executive), Anne McConkey (Head of People and Organisational Development) and Jenny Marshall (TGWU).

191. Minutes:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

192. Declaration of Interests:

Councillor Ian Tomes declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the council's superannuation scheme by virtue of his partner's employment.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



193. Minutes from the Health and Safety Committee:

The Forum members considered the minutes from the last two meetings of the Health and Safety Committee on 27th September and 6th December 2006. Mark Wareham raised UNISON's ongoing concern about the lone working arrangements at the Central Control Centre at Barrington Road.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Health and Safety meeting held on 27th September and 6th December 2006 be noted.

194. Office Centralisation Project – Standing Item:

Councillor Culver reported that enabling works were underway to provide cabling and power to the IT and telecoms server room, which would be protected during the building works with an internal steel construction.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

195. Comprehensive Equalities Policy: Managers' Guide to Recruiting, Employing and Retaining People with Disabilities:

The Employee Relation Manager presented her report (previously circulated). Mark Wareham indicated that UNISON supported the introduction of the Guide. However, he also pointed out that the Government was reconsidering the Access to Work funding currently provided by Job Centres through the Disability Employment Advisory Teams.

Resolved: that the New Disability Guide be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

196. Access to Council Services – Customer Index:

The Forum considered the previously circulated report of the Customer Services Manager (CSM). The Forum discussed whether information (relating to customers who may pose a threat to the safety of staff) could be shared with councillors. It was agreed that the CSM would raise with the Data Commissioner. The Forum welcomed the paper, and:

Resolved: that the approach set out in the report be supported.

197. Recruitment and Retention Scrutiny Action Plan - Update:

The Forum received an update from the Workforce Planning Manager and welcomed the progress that was being made to implement the recommendations of the scrutiny review.

Resolved: that the Update be noted.

198. Pensions Update:

Mark Wareham gave an update to the Forum. Broadly, UNISON welcomed most of the changes proposed by the Government, although a last minute change removing the right to pension upon redundancy for those aged over 50 was causing concern. UNISON would continue to negotiate with the Government before deciding if any further industrial action should be proposed.

Resolved: that the update be noted

199. Staff Development Framework:

The Forum considered the previously circulated report of the Workforce Planning Manager and welcomed the introduction of the new Staff Development Framework.

Resolved: that the Staff Development Framework be supported.

200. Workforce Information – standing item:

The Forum considered the previously circulated paper of the Workforce Planning Manager. The Forum noted that maternity leave was not shown within the figures. The Forum also considered concerns about the 3-month moratorium on filling vacancies. Councillor Culver explained the policy and how it applied in the case of maternity leave. Her also indicated that the policy could be reviewed where it was shown that this would otherwise have a significant impact on the service or staff concerned.

Resolved: that the Update be noted

201. Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure:

The Forum considered the revised Sickness Absence Policy paper (previously circulated) of the Employee Relations Manager. The UNISON Branch Organiser raised no objection in principle to the procedure, but considered that it was important that the policy was applied with common sense by managers and not used as an inflexible set of rules.

Resolved: that the paper be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

202. Outcome of Council Housing Transfer Ballot:

The Forum considered the previously circulated paper of the UNISON Branch Organiser. Councillor Culver indicated that the Council had already considered the matter and set out a course of action in the light of the ballot result. He indicated that the Government might be taking another look at the position of Local Authorities with retained housing, in view of the obvious reluctance of tenants in some areas to accept the options preferred by the Government.

Resolved: that the Cabinet be asked to consider the UNISON statement and to recommend a response for consideration by the Full Council.

203. Green Travel:

The Forum considered the previously circulated response of the Transportation Planner. Mark Wareham stated that while UNISON understood the problems faced by some members - particularly rural members - the issue still caused some ill-feeling with staff particularly as staff were now obliged to accept the policy imposed by members, when it appeared to staff that many members were not adopting the policy themselves.

Resolved: that the concerns be noted.

204. Preferred Time and Day of Future JCF Meetings:

The Forum considered the responses of the Members.

Resolved: that meetings continue to be held at 10:00am on Fridays.

205. Terms of Reference:

The Forum considered the amendments proposed by UNISON.

Resolved: that Cabinet be asked to approve the changes to the Forum's Terms of Reference as set out in the officer's report subject to:

In Para. (a) delete reference to Collective Terms and Conditions of Employment; and

In Para (b) amend the membership so that the two scrutiny panel representatives and their deputies do not have to be drawn exclusively from Resources OSP; and

add that the Independent group be invited to nominate a non-voting observer should they so wish.

206. Date of Next Meeting:

The Forum discussed the date for the next meeting

Resolved: – that the next meeting be held on Friday 27th April at 10.00am at the Depot.

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

The Forum noted that the results of the Equal Pay Audit had been circulated to members after publication of the agenda and it was:

Resolved: – that the Equal Pay Audit be considered at the next meeting of this Forum.

Meeting closed at 13.10 pm