

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR COUNTY COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

Report of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 May 2003 at County Hall, Trowbridge.

Present

Richard Woodroffe	Chief Personnel Officer
Mandy Collyer	Principal Personnel Officer
David Thorne	Senior Personnel Officer (minutes)
Janet Dapson	UNISON
Russ Brook	UNISON
Sylvia Smith	UNISON
Yo Suter	UNISON
Anna Stasyshyn	UNISON
Sarah Peters	UNISON
Kevin Brandstatter	GMB
Mike Short	ATL

1. Election of Chairman for the meeting

It was agreed that Russ Brook would chair the meeting.

2. Apologies

Peter Smith (Director of Corporate Services); Janet Woodcock (UNISON).

3. Report of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

3.1. The minutes of 21 January 2003 were agreed and actions taken noted.

3.2. (Ref 4.2) Residential Establishment Staff Arrangements.

UNISON will be publishing an article in Moonrakings in June. Yo Suter had given Peter Smith a Risk Assessment for the staff. Richard Woodroffe said that the County Council recognised the risks involved, wished to address these and was pleased that the Trade Union side would help in this.

3.3. (Ref 5.2) Missing Disclosure information.

Richard has drafted a letter to employees about whom ethnic monitoring information is not held. He will circulate this to the staff side for comment and endorsement.

3.4. (Ref 6.1) The Code of Practice on Workforce Matters - see Item 8

3.5. (Ref 6.2) Middle Schools reorganisation.

Richard recalled that approval for the reorganisation had been given in January. He said that implementation will be phased and he hopes that many of the staff whose jobs will cease due to school closure will be offered employment in the remodelled schools. He will ask Jane Tagg to brief the next JCC. Richard also confirmed that, as a single employer, the County Council would seek redeployment opportunities both within and outside schools to avoid the dismissal of otherwise redundant administrative staff.

3.6. (Ref 6.3) Waverley House.

Richard reported that 15-20 organisations had expressed an interest in tendering for the service, which is subject to stringent procurement criteria. With 25 staff affected, there

will be a wide range of issues to address. Janet Dapson said that representations will be made on behalf of the clients to a Cabinet Meeting on 20 May. Richard will ask Tricia Glover to brief the next JCC. He will inform Russ Brook, once tendering has closed, of those organisations which have submitted a tender.

4. Home Care & Single Status

Janet raised the issue of single status not being applied to Home Care staff. Richard recalled that, at the time, an arrangement had been reached where introduction of single status was deferred to make the Home Care service competitive without the need for externalisation. However, this deferral was always meant to be a temporary measure. The management of the service is currently considering options and their implications, with a view to bringing forward proposals to apply single status to Home Care staff and thereby complete its implementation. UNISON raised concerns that agency staff used in Home Care (and possibly also Residential Homes) may not have been checked with the CRB. Richard will make further enquiries about this.

5. Job Evaluation Process & Job Evaluation Appeals Procedure

5.1. Mandy Collyer gave the meeting a summary of changes she has made to the JE process and JE Appeals procedure. These were agreed in principle but she will meet with the staff side to discuss the detail. The changes are primarily to clarify roles and timescales.

5.2. The changes to the process are:

- A checklist for managers, Personnel Officers and Unions
- Changes to standard letters and new letters, which further clarify roles/responsibilities
- Personnel Officers to be notified earlier to help in scheduling of interviews
- Current Job Descriptions to be submitted for comparison
- The JE Questionnaire can now be e-mailed

5.3. The changes to the Appeals Procedure are:

- A checklist including timescales
- An additional meeting built-in between the Appellant, Personnel Officer and Manager
- Changes to standard letters, clarifying roles
- 3 hearings per year scheduled-in so delays can be reduced
- The appellant will receive the Personnel Officer's submission prior to Appeal, showing what is considered relevant.

6. Grievance Procedure – Revision

Richard explained that the procedure has been amended so that it can apply to an employee who has lodged a complaint of bullying or harassment but who feels that they have not received a satisfactory outcome to their complaint. Following discussion, it was also agreed that these and other changes would be made, which will be circulated at the next JCC.

7. Disciplinary Procedure – Timescales

7.1. Janet expressed concern at the time taken to conduct some disciplinary cases and the effect on staff of being suspended.

7.2. Richard replied that cases were pursued as quickly as possible although sometimes this was influenced by events such as the length of time involved in Police investigations

and the availability of written statements from the Police. The use of suspension is limited and only imposed where deemed necessary. Richard acknowledged that suspension can be an isolating experience and agreed to review the information and support available to suspended employees.

8. Code of Practice on Workforce Matters

Richard reported that the County Council is considering the implications of the new Code of Practice and he will write to the staff side or bring to the JCC in due course. The main issues within the Code are:

- TUPE will apply where it does not strictly do so
- Staff transferred will be offered a scheme comparable to the LGPS
- The new employer should engage staff on a package no worse than their existing one
- The County Council has an obligation to monitor and enforce compliance by the new employer.

9. Criteria for Issuing Mobile Phones

In answer to a query on criteria used, Richard said that issuing mobile phones was an operational matter. If an employee feels at risk through lack of a mobile phone he/she can ask for a risk assessment to be carried out. Richard had received no evidence that, where risks had been identified and provision of a mobile phone seen as mitigating that risk, any manager had refused to supply one. He will discuss guidance for use with the Health and Safety Manager.

10. Vulnerable Adults - Procedure for Staff

Janet told the meeting that, since the introduction of the Vulnerable Adults Procedure, an increasing number of staff have been subject to police investigation, for which they were unprepared. Richard suggested that Janet write to Jeanette Longhurst to address the need to inform and educate staff of what is a necessary part of the protection of vulnerable adults.

11. Criteria for Absence Monitoring

Janet reported that some staff feel that different criteria are used for conducting absence monitoring. Richard replied that if an employee feels the procedure has been misapplied they should raise the matter with their manager. The procedure is available on the intranet and staff should be allowed access to look at it. The process is not designed to be unfair to people with genuine sickness but to tackle absence issues in a responsible, sensitive, empathetic way. There has been an extensive training programme for managers in Adult & Community Services and one is on-going in Children, Education and Libraries.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Janet reported that some staff had felt unhappy about having to provide their driving licence and insurance details. Richard replied that the County Council had a duty to ensure that people are qualified and properly insured.

12.2. In answer to a query on the Local Government Commission on Pay, Richard replied that the Leader has written to the Commission, setting out the County Council's perceptions. Richard will ask the Leader whether he is prepared to divulge his comments.

12.3. Richard noted that John Marshall would no longer be attending the JCC and that Janet Woodcock would be replacing him. He wished to record in the minutes his best wishes to John.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 14 July 2003 – 10.30 a.m. – Committee Room 6

JCC: Summary of Actions arising from 14 May 2003 meeting

Para	Action	By whom	By when
3.2	Consult with staff on arrangements in Residential Establishments and report back	UNISON	ASAP
5.2	Circulate draft letter on missing disclosure information. Invite staff side to meeting with DIALOG	Richard Woodroffe	ASAP When date known
3.5/ 3.6	Ask Jane Tagg / Tricia Glover to brief next JCC on restructures Supply list of organisations tendering for Waverley House contract to Russ Brook	Richard Woodroffe	Next JCC Close of tender
4	Home Care Single Status Proposals Investigate agencies' use of CRB checks	Richard Woodroffe	When developed ASAP
5	Meeting with staff on JE changes	Mandy Collyer	ASAP
6	Amendments to Grievance Procedure	Mandy Collyer	Next JCC
7.2	Look at notes for Suspension	Richard Woodroffe	Next JCC
8	Workforce Matters – write to staff side or bring to JCC	Richard Woodroffe	When resolved
9	Review mobile phone use guidance	Paul Collyer	ASAP
12.1	Ask the Leader to pass on comments re Local Govt Commission on Pay	Richard Woodroffe	Next JCC