

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held within the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Thursday, 4 July 2002 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Daniel McCafferty, Ronnie McColl and Connie O'Sullivan, Harry Frew and John Kennedy (UCATT); Jackaleen McMonagle (MSF); John Brannigan, John Flaherty and Peter McNicol (T & GWU); *Tom Rainey, Tom Dick, *Tom Morrison and *Kathleen Ryall (UNISON); Michael Conroy, Jim Gibson and Donald Hamilton (GMB).

Attending: Gerry McInerney, Head of Personnel; Alan Douglas, Manager – Best Value & Special Projects; and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Mary Collins, James Flynn and Ian McDonald and Ronald Alexander (EIS) and James Fraser (UCATT).

* Attended later in meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

As the Chair of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF), Mr. Tom Morrison, had been delayed it was agreed that the meeting be chaired by Ms. Jackaleen McMonagle pending Mr. Morrison's arrival.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of Meetings of the Forum held on 11 April 2002 and 13 June 2002 (inquorate) were submitted and approved as a correct record.

NEW COUNCIL STRUCTURE

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Forum held on 11 April 2002, a report was submitted by the Head of Personnel advising on the new system of decision making within the Council.

It was noted:-

- (a) that whilst the JCF was not a Committee of the Council, the Forum was currently established within the Council's formal structure and as a consequence was bound by its standing orders and administrative arrangements; and

- (b) that the management side considered that the profile of the Forum was raised by it being part of the formal Council structure which was vital for the corporate nature of its business interests, adding value to its status and recognising the importance of the workforce to the Council.

After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney, it was agreed:-

- (i) that the Joint Consultative Forum remain part of the formal Council structure;
- (ii) that the new Council structure be noted;
- (iii) that the trades union representatives would consider the request by Mr. Rainey to establish a working group comprising of trades union representatives which would meet in advance of the meetings of the JCF and would put forward the recommendations of the trades union side in respect of any issues under consideration; and
- (iv) that a joint report on the proposed arrangements concerning (iii) above would be considered at the next meeting of the Forum.

NOTE: Messrs. Rainey and Morrison and Ms. Ryall entered the meeting during consideration of the above item. The Chair was vacated by Ms. McMonagle at this point in the proceedings and Mr. Morrison assumed the Chair.

DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR OFFICER/MEMBER RELATIONS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel seeking the views of the JCF on a proposed protocol for officer/Member relations.

It was noted that the draft protocol was designed to aid relations between officers and Members, its guiding principles being for officers and Members to work together effectively, act within the law and the Standing Orders of the Council, behave with mutual courtesy, communicate effectively and adopt a constructive approach to resolving any differences and difficulties.

After discussion, it was agreed that this item be continued to the next meeting of the Forum and considered at the proposed trades union representatives working group prior to the meeting.

ROLE OF JOINT SECRETARIES

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel on the role of the Joint Secretaries within the Forum.

It was noted that the Joint Secretaries may, or may not be, members of the Forum and should be responsible for:-

- (a) preparation of agenda, reports and presentations for meetings of the Forum;
- (b) agreeing the Minutes of meetings of the Forum for submission to the Chair for approval;
- (c) taking follow-up action required arising from any decisions or recommendations of the Forum; and
- (d) reporting back to Departmental Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs) on any issues brought to the JCF for consideration.

After discussion, it was agreed that this item be continued to the next meeting of the Forum and considered at the proposed trades union representatives working group prior to the meeting.

ITEMS SUBMITTED BY TRADES UNION SIDE

(a) Maximising Attendance

Mr. Rainey raised the issue of how managers were being trained in terms of implementing the Maximising Attendance policy. After discussion and having heard Mr. McInerney in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position of the training programme for managers on the Maximising Attendance policy; and
- (ii) to commend the decision taken to appoint a Welfare Officer for non-teaching staff, it having been noted that the Council was one of the first local authorities in Scotland to do so.

(b) Appeals Committee Hearings

Having heard Mr. McInerney in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (i) to note the concerns which had been expressed in relation to the period of time it took for an appeal to be heard by the Appeals Committee, particularly in relation to the lack of availability of representatives of both sides, witnesses, etc.;

- (ii) to note that an additional four Members had recently been nominated to serve on the Appeals Committee and it was anticipated that this would have a positive effect by making it less likely for a meeting to be cancelled because of a lack of a quorum;
- (iii) to request that an item be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Policy Development Working Group with a view to devising a mechanism for fast tracking certain appeals cases; and
- (iv) to request that representatives of the trades unions together with officers from Personnel and Legal Services be invited to the next meeting of the Policy Development Working Group in order that they could participate in the discussion on this issue.

(c) Written Warnings

Having heard Mr. McNicol and Mr. McInerney in respect of the above and following discussion, the Forum agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position in relation to this matter; and
- (ii) that further discussions take place on the Council's Disciplinary Procedures with particular reference to reviewing warnings issued without limit of time.

PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel seeking the views of the JCF on a draft framework for performance and development planning within the Council.

It was noted:-

- (a) that the Accounts Commission encouraged Councils to improve service delivery through the development of their workforce;
- (b) that most Councils had introduced a performance and personal development planning process to link Council commitments to the work of individual employees in terms of assessing their development needs and recording any actions to be taken and identifying any career aspirations held; and
- (c) that the Corporate Services Department was also pursuing Investors in People recognition which, as with any quality framework, required the Council to:-
 - (i) inform employees of what was expected of them;
 - (ii) recognise how employees were performing; and

- (iii) agree development plans and monitor progress in relation thereto.

Having heard Mr. McInerney, the Forum agreed that this item be continued to the next meeting of the Forum and considered at the proposed trades union representatives working group prior to the meeting.

MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JCCs

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel providing copies of the minutes from departmental Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) Meetings.

Having heard Mr. McInerney, it was noted that the Corporate Services Departmental JCC did not take place on 15 April 2002, as there had been no representation by the trades union side at the meeting.

After discussion, the Forum agreed to note the terms of the report.

APPROVED REPORTS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel on reports approved by Council.

It was noted:-

- (a) that a report which reviewed the structure and service provided within the registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages had been approved by Council at its meeting on 24 April 2002 following appropriate consultation with the relevant trades union;
- (b) that at the Council meeting held on 24 April 2002, Members had approved the appointment of a Welfare Officer, graded AP5, at a cost of £27,212 per annum, following consideration of a report on the Employment Welfare Service; and
- (c) having heard Mr. McInerney, that arrangements had been made to have the post at (b) above advertised for recruitment, although no budgetary provision had been made for this post at the current time.

After discussion, the Forum agreed to note the terms of the report.

STANDING ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney, the Forum agreed to note the current position of some of the standing items of business, namely Training and Development, Health and Safety, Single Status, Best Value and McCrone Recommendations.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(a) Supply of Clothing/Uniforms

Mr. Conroy advised that his trades union had contacted all Councils in Scotland to ascertain the position of clothing/uniforms for Council employees being manufactured by trades union organised production facilities and manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas was then heard in clarification of certain matters and, in particular, the obligations placed on Councils to follow the European Procurement process.

After discussion, the Forum agreed to note that Mr. Conroy would be preparing a Notice of Motion with a view to having a Member of the Council submit it to the meeting of Council on 28 August 2002 on this matter.

(b) Public Private Partnership

Mr. Conroy advised that following a meeting of G.M.B. shop stewards, it had been unanimously agreed to applaud the decision taken by Council not to participate in public private partnership arrangements.

(c) Minutes of Departmental Health and Safety Meetings

Having heard Mr. Frew, it was agreed that minutes of the departmental Health and Safety meetings should be included as an item of business on the Forum and copies thereof would be issued with the agenda papers.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 7 November 2002 at 2.00 p.m. in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton with a pre-meeting involving the trades unions representatives only taking place at 11.00 a.m. on the same day.

The meeting closed at 3.51 p.m.