

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 2 December 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Margaret Bootland, Gail Casey and Jack Duffy; Margaret Ferris, Tom Dick, Tom Morrison and Tom Rainey (UNISON); Jackie McMonagle (AMICUS); James Fraser (UCATT); Neil Casey, Charlie McDonald and Donald McDougall (T&GWU); Norman Bissell (EIS) and Alex McEwan (SSTA).

Attending: Gerry McNerney, Director of Corporate Services; Tricia O'Neill, Head of Personnel Services; Nigel Ettles, Principal Solicitor; Bob Davidson, Section Head – Facilities Management and Shona Barton, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Provost Alistair Macdonald and Councillor Jim Bolland, Harry Frew, Kath Ryall, Bill Keady, Mick Conroy and Stewart Patterson.

Councillor Margaret Bootland in the Chair

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

4438 The Forum noted that as a year had elapsed since Councillor Bootland had been appointed Chair, in terms of the constitution of the Forum, a Chair required to be appointed. The Forum agreed that Margaret Ferris of UNISON be appointed as Chair with Councillor Margaret Bootland being appointed Vice Chair. It was agreed that Margaret Ferris would take up the position of Chair on conclusion of this meeting of the Forum.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4439 The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) held on 16 September 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

TRADE UNION RECOGNITION AND FACILITIES AGREEMENT

4440 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1074, paragraph 3570 refers), Mr McNerney provided an update on this matter.

4441 After discussion, the Forum agreed that a meeting would be arranged between representatives of the Trades Unions and management to allow further consultation. It was noted that in the interim the current procedures in relation to Trade Union recognition, facilities and time off would remain in place.

4442 In relation to a point raised by Mr. Rainey regarding an employee who had to take unpaid leave in order to attend a Local Government relevant Trades Union conference, Mr. McInerney asked that specific details of this matter be passed to the Head of Personnel in order that the matter could be further considered.

SCHEME OF DELEGATED FUNCTIONS - INSURANCE

4443 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1074, paragraph 3572 refers), Mr. McInerney provided an update on this matter.

4444 The Forum agreed that this matter be continued to enable a satisfactory proposal to be agreed by all parties with a progress report to the next meeting.

COSLA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CIRCULAR 3/04 – MCCRONE AGREEMENT

4445 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1075, paragraph 3574 refers), there was submitted for information a memo from the Director of Education and Cultural Services and a copy of a report previously submitted to the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers on 21 September 2004 informing of the arrangements for Support Staff in Educational Establishments.

4446 After discussion and having heard Mr. McInerney and Mr. Dick in further explanation, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to refer this matter to the Director of Education and Cultural Services for further clarification on Trade Union side concerns that inconsistencies existed in structure and grades between schools; and
- (2) that an update be provided at the next meeting of the Forum.

NOTE: Councillor Duffy left the meeting during discussion of the above item.

REDEPLOYMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES STAFF

- 4447 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1077, paragraph 3590 refers), the Forum referred to the memo from the Director of Education and Cultural Services listed under the previous item on the agenda.
- 4448 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation, the Forum noted the content of the memo from the Director of Education and Cultural Services, and agreed that this issue should be given further consideration at the next meeting of the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee.

NOTE: Councillor Duffy re-entered the meeting during discussion of the above item.

LEISURE CATERING SERVICES

- 4449 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1076, paragraph 3586 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing an update on actions taken in response to Trade Union concerns arising from the externalisation of the catering service in the leisure facilities of the Play Drome and Meadow Sports Centres.
- 4450 The Forum heard Mr. McNerney introduce Mr. Bob Davidson, Section Head – Facilities Management who updated the Forum on the current position on this matter. The Forum noted that individual departments had discretion to use the outside caterers for functions/meetings or to choose in-house provision. Mr. Davidson advised the Forum that a meeting with the Managing Director of the outside catering firm involved would be arranged within the next few weeks. After discussion, the Forum agreed that this matter be continued until the next meeting and that an update would be provided at that time.

DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE APPEALS

- 4451 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 16 September 2004 (page 1077, paragraph 3587 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing information from Corporate Services records on the number of discipline and grievance appeals and their outcome.
- 4452 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation, the Forum agreed that a meeting would be arranged, at an early opportunity, between the Head of Personnel Services and the Trades Union Conveners to discuss the issues raised in relation to this matter.

NOTE: Councillor Duffy left the meeting at this point in proceedings.

INCREASING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 4453 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing an update on the success of the scheme to provide employees of West Dunbartonshire Council with discounted membership for physical activity at the Council's indoor leisure facilities.
- 4454 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation the Forum noted the contents of the report.

COSLA STAFFING WATCH SURVEY

- 4455 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services informing on the size of the Council's workforce as at 10 September 2004.
- 4456 Having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation the Forum noted the contents of the report.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 1 (2004/2005)

- 4457 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period from 1 April 2004 to 30 June 2004.
- 4458 Having heard Mr. McNerney in clarification, the Forum noted the contents of the report.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TEMPORARY, CASUAL, SESSIONAL AND OCCASIONAL WORKERS

- 4459 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services informing of a policy statement on the employment of Occasional Workers previously known as temporary, casual, sessional and seasonal workers.
- 4460 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum noted the policy statement on the employment of Occasional Workers.

POLICY STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 4461 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services asking the Forum to note the terms of a Policy Statement on Freedom of Information (Fol).

- 4462 Having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation, the Forum noted the terms of the Policy Statement on Freedom of Information. In relation to a point raised by Mr. McDonald it was agreed that the Trades Unions side would be full participants in the training to be provided for front line staff on Freedom of Information.

MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

- 4463 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing copies of the Minutes from Departmental Joint Consultative Committee meetings and Departmental Health and Safety meetings.
- 4464 The Forum noted that the minute from the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee would be amended to show that an assurance which had been sought by the Trades Unions was given by management in relation to the item on holidays for 2005/06.

TRADES UNION ISSUES

- 4465 It was noted that there were no Trades Union issues to be raised at this meeting of the Forum. It was agreed that the Trades Unions would endeavour in future to arrange a meeting before the Agenda had been set to discuss any issues that they wished to raise at the Forum.

STANDING ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 4466 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney, the Forum agreed to note the current position of the standing items of business, namely Best Value, McCrone Recommendations and Training and Development.
- 4467 In particular, the following items were discussed:-

Appeals Committee Hearings

- 4468 The Forum heard Mr. Ettles who provided an update on this matter. It was noted that at present there were 2 disciplinary appeals and 6 grievance appeals outstanding. However, the disciplinary appeals and two of the grievance appeals had been postponed at the request of the appellants. It was also noted that since the last meeting of the Forum, 2 grievance appeals had been heard.

Budget Planning

- 4469 The Forum heard Mr. McNerney who provided an update on this matter. It was noted that the Council would find out the settlement figure from the Scottish Executive on 8 December 2004. The Forum agreed, that once the Council was aware of this information, a meeting would be arranged between the Trades Unions and management at which a presentation would be given detailing the budget projections and the associated implications.

Single Status

- 4470 Mr. McNerney provided an update on this matter. Mr. McNerney advised the Forum that information on the proposals would be circulated to the Trades Unions before the Christmas break.

Health and Safety

- 4471 In relation to a point raised by Mr. Bissell regarding the availability of statistics detailing violence against staff in educational establishments, Mr. McNerney advised that he would contact the Education Department for clarification on this matter.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- 4472 The Chair, Councillor Bootland, expressed her thanks to Mr. McNerney for all his support and to the Forum for their support during her year as Chair. Councillor Bootland then invited Margaret Ferris to take the Chair for the following item of business. Accordingly Margaret Ferris assumed the Chair.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 4473 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 17 March 2005 at 2.00 p.m. in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton with a pre-meeting involving the trades unions representatives only, taking place at 11.00 a.m. the same day.
- 4474 The Chair, Margaret Ferris, thanked her colleagues for their nomination to the post of Chair of the Forum and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 4.10 p.m.