

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 6 September 2007 at 2.10 p.m.

Present: Councillors George Black, Margaret Bootland, Geoff Calvert, Jim Finn and David McBride. Margaret Ferris, Denise McLafferty and Tom Rainey (UNISON); Jackaleen McMonagle (AMICUS); Neil Casey and Charlie McDonald (T&GWU); Duncan Borland, Mick Conroy and Donald Hamilton (GMB); Stewart Patterson (EIS) and Alex McEwan (SSTA).

Attending: Ronnie Dinnie, Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Land and Environment); Tricia O'Neill, Head of Personnel Services; Alan Douglas, Manager of Best Value and Special Projects and Shona Barton, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim McElhill and Ronnie McColl, David McMillan, Chief Executive, Tom Dick, Kath Ryall and Brian Courtney.

Margaret Ferris in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) held on 21 June 2007 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

In relation to a point raised by Mr. Patterson under the heading "Corporate Eyecare Procedures", the Forum noted that the policy has been amended to take account of the concerns of the trades unions and that the policy would now be circulated to staff.

In relation to a point raised by Mr. McDonald under the heading "Minutes of JCC's and Health and Safety Meetings", the Forum noted that minutes of the Roads Operations JCC's would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

EMPLOYEE SURVEY

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing an update on the Employee Survey, and outlining the findings of the survey and the associated staff focus groups.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Personnel Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note the findings of the survey as detailed in the Appendix to the report;
- (2) to note that the Council has agreed to form a Member/Officer Working Group to look at the issues raised by the questionnaire; and
- (3) to note that the trades unions welcomed the findings of the survey and would participate in any discussions to address the findings.

ST ANDREW'S DAY BANK HOLIDAY – 30TH NOVEMBER

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services seeking feedback from the JCF in relation to the celebration of St Andrew's Day and the substitution of the national St Andrew's day holiday for an existing local holiday.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Personnel Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note that the trades unions would advocate the creation of a St Andrew's Day holiday in addition to the existing Public Holiday entitlement; and
- (2) that the trades unions should consult with their members and provide further feedback to the Head of Personnel Services, in order that this can be fed back to the Council and the Corporate Management Team for consideration.

TEMPORARY CHANGES TO PAY FREQUENCY AND AMOUNTS – CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD 2007/2008

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel providing the Forum with details of the proposed intention to alter the pay frequency and amounts for the Christmas and New Year period, and asking the Forum to consider the proposed arrangements.

Having heard the Head of Personnel Services, the Forum agreed to note the proposed intention to alter the pay frequency and amounts for the Christmas and New Year period 2007/2008.

DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE INFORMATION

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing figures for discipline and grievance appeals held at department level (Stage 2) for the period from 1 April 2007 – 30 June 2007.

The Forum heard from the Manager of Best Value and Special Projects who provided an update on Appeals Committee hearings.

The Forum noted that since the JCF on 21 June 2007, 1 dismissal appeal had been heard, 1 grievance appeal had been heard, 1 grievance appeal had been withdrawn, 1 dismissal appeal had been submitted and 2 grievance appeals had been submitted. It was further noted that there were 2 dismissal appeals and 15 grievance appeals outstanding.

The Forum noted that it was the intention to have two appeals heard every month until the backlog is cleared.

After discussion, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum, providing information on the timescales involved during the Appeals process and whether these timescales are being met by departments;
- (2) that consideration be given to putting in place agreed timescales when dealing with appeals at stage 3; and
- (3) to note that discussions were being undertaken by the Personnel Working Group on Discipline and Grievance on the processes which are currently in place.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 1 (APRIL – JUNE 2007/2008)

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services advising on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period from 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2007.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

In relation to a point raised by Mr. Patterson, the Forum noted that officers should consider their use of language when drafting reports.

In relation to a point raised by Ms. McLafferty, the Forum noted that the trades unions should be made aware of any measures which the Corporate Management Team propose to put in place for managing absence.

MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY MEETINGS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing Minutes from Departmental Joint Consultative Committees (JCC's) and Health & Safety meetings.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

TRADE UNION ISSUES

Convenor's Job Evaluations

Having heard Ms. McLafferty, the Forum noted that there were concerns that the post of trades union Convenor was not being treated as a unique post with regard to the ongoing job evaluation exercise.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Personnel Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that the trades unions should give further consideration to the facilities agreement and to the role of trades union Convenor; and
- (2) that the Convenors should endeavour to agree a job profile, for discussion with management, which could then be submitted for job evaluation.

Changes to Strathclyde Pension Fund

The Forum heard from Ms. McLafferty who advised of the recent correspondence issued to all members of the Pension Fund. After discussion, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that the Head of Personnel should contact representatives from the Pension Fund and organise a series of seminars for employees, to provide further information on the changes that have been made and on the consultation that is underway on the proposal to make further changes to the scheme; and
- (2) to note that the trades unions would encourage the Council to advertise more widely the benefits of becoming a member of the scheme.

STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Forum agreed to note the current position on the following:-

- (i) Appeals Committee Hearings
- (ii) Best Value
- (iii) McCrone Recommendations
- (iv) Health and Safety

Budget Planning

In relation to a point raised by Mr. Patterson, the Forum noted that there were concerns over the budget deficit. After discussion and having heard Councillors Finn and McBride, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note that the budget process was still ongoing, and as such there were no definite figures available concerning the amount of deficit; and

- (2) that a meeting would be arranged between the trades unions convenors and Administration Councillors, to discuss the budget deficit situation and the resulting implications.

Single Status

Having heard Mr. Conroy, the Forum noted that there were still concerns over this issue and that substantial funds would still be required to settle the outstanding equal pay claims.

Absence

In relation to a point raised by Mr. McDonald concerning manual workers being deducted pay without warning, it was noted that details of any specific incidents should be passed to the Acting Director of Housing, Environment & Economic Development to allow an investigation to be carried out.

It was further noted that the trades unions had concerns that pay deductions could take place without prior written warning.

Training and Development

In relation to a point raised by Mr. Casey, regarding the inconsistent procedures for keeping employee training records, it was noted that the Council has agreed to fund a centralised Human Resources Information System which would support future improvements in record keeping.

FUTURE ITEMS FOR JCF AGENDA

Having heard Ms. McLafferty in relation to the format of the agenda for the JCF it was agreed:-

- (1) that a review of the agenda for the JCF should be undertaken;
- (2) that a meeting be arranged between the trades unions convenors, the Chief Executive, the CMT and the Head of Personnel Services to discuss the format of the agenda; and
- (3) that in future the trades unions would endeavour to meet before the agenda for the JCF is issued, in order that they can submit any issues for inclusion on the agenda.

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

Having heard the Head of Personnel Services, the Forum noted:-

- (1) that a revised management structure had been implemented from 3 September 2007;
- (2) that there would be various changes within departments;
- (3) that any matching process would take place using the organisational change policy; and
- (4) that a further consultation meeting would be arranged with the Trade Unions to outline the matching proposals.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 29 November 2007 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.

The meeting closed at 3.37 p.m.