

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 24 June 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors George Black; David McBride and Jonathan McColl, Denise McLafferty, Tom Morrison, Carrie McGuire and Margaret Wood (UNISON); Brian Courtney and Charlie McDonald (UNITE); Alex McEwan (S.S.T.A.), Duncan Borland, Martin Doran and John Wagner (GMB); Stewart Paterson (EIS); John Kennedy (UCATT) and Jackie McMonagle (AMICUS).

Attending: Terry Lanagan, Executive Director of Educational Services; Tricia O'Neill, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Angela Terry, Manager of Organisational Development; Alan Douglas, Manager of Legal Services and Nuala Borthwick, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Margaret Bootland, John Millar and Jim Finn; Margaret Ferris (UNISON) and Neil Casey (UNITE); and Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest from Members on any items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) held on 25 March 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided an update in relation to various issues and the Forum agreed to note:-

- (1) that a Briefing Note entitled 'Emissions Monitoring and Vehicle Tracking' had been issued to the Trades Unions and that a future meeting would be arranged between Management and the Trades Unions to discuss the matter further;
- (2) that discussions had taken place between Management and the Trades Unions on the Childcare Voucher Scheme and that the Scheme had been publicised in the Council's Westlife Magazine and on the intranet;

- (3) that the planned meeting of the Competitive Working Group had not yet taken place and that an invitation be extended to the Trades Unions to attend the meeting when re-scheduled;
- (4)
 - (a) that the Trades Unions Recognition and Facilities Agreement had been approved at the meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 26 May 2010; and
 - (b) that the Agreement would be implemented on 1 July 2010 and that all requests for time off should be made using the request pro-forma and submitted to the Trades Unions Representative's line manager on each occasion;
- (5) to note that the revised policies and procedures for Discipline, Grievance and Dignity at Work had been approved at the meeting of the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee held on 26 May 2010 and that joint training would be developed and delivered to Managers through Human Resources and the trades' unions;
- (6) to note the concerns of the joint Trades Unions on the unresolved issues in relation to ongoing departmental restructuring within the Council; and
- (7)
 - (a) to note that the Terms of Reference of the Joint Independent Job Evaluation Review had been agreed between management and the joint Trades Unions;
 - (b) that the appointed management representative for the joint review was Brian Hutchison, former Head of Personnel, Clackmannanshire Council and the appointed trades unions representative was Rachel Edgar, Edgar Consultancy and Training; and
 - (c) that the Trades Unions concerns would be taken on board during the review including a request for worked examples of reviews where it was considered necessary.

LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY

A report was submitted by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development:-

- (1) providing an update on preliminary discussions between Organisational Development and the Trades Unions on Lifelong Learning; and
- (2) setting out a proposed set of principles on how the Council and Trades Union representatives would work together to develop this further within the organisation.

Having heard the Manager of Organisational Development in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed the proposed principles for working together to develop an approach to Lifelong Learning.

DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE INFORMATION

A report was submitted by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development providing information on discipline and grievance appeals held at departmental level (Stage 2) during the period 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010.

Following discussion and having heard the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development in further explanation of the report, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to thank the Trades Unions representatives for the way they conduct themselves during Appeals Committee Hearings; and
- (2) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING – QUARTER 4 (2009/2010) AND ANNUAL RETURN 2009/2010

A report was submitted by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development advising on the levels of employee sickness absence over the following periods:-

- (a) Fourth quarter – January, February and March 2010; and
- (b) 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 (annual return).

Following a lengthy discussion, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that Ms O'Neill would investigate the specific case raised by Councillor McBride in relation to attendance management;
- (2) to note the concerns of the Trades Unions in relation to the changes to the current posts of Welfare Rights Officers under the Human Resources departmental re-structuring and the view of the Trades Unions that the posts would no longer be considered "independent" when the role was changed which could have a negative impact on absence rates; and
- (3) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum providing information on the previous role and remit of the Welfare Rights Officers including a breakdown of statistics in relation to: (a) the number of cases dealt with by the Officers; (b) the percentage of cases related to stress; and (c) the changes to the post under the Human Resources departmental restructure.

**MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES,
DEPARTMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY MEETINGS
AND EMPLOYEE LIAISON GROUP**

A report was submitted by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development:-

- (a) providing the minutes from Departmental Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs), Health & Safety meetings and the Employee Liaison Group (ELG) meetings for the period from 25 March 2010 until committee paper deadline for the meeting of 24 June 2010 including any outstanding minutes; and
- (b) seeking approval for electronic reporting for future reports given the current volume of paper associated with this report.

Following discussions and having heard the Executive Director of Educational Services and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that given the volume of paper generated from providing paper copies of all JCC minutes, the Employee Liaison Group be tasked with considering the best mechanism for providing future Minutes of JCC Meetings electronically only;
- (2) to note with concern that meetings of JCC for Land Services (Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning) and Waste and Transport Services and Departmental Health and Safety Meetings for Roads Operations had not taken place;
- (3) that the issue of pupils eating in the stairwells of St. Peter the Apostle High School remained a health and safety concern albeit the Head Teacher was actively trying to contain the problem;
- (4) to note that the issue of missing equipment (mainly computer equipment) from the transfer over to St. Peter the Apostle High School was being investigated by Officers and currently remained unresolved;
- (5) to note the concerns expressed by the Trades Unions side concerning the variation to the cleaning specifications in the new high schools were put under considerable pressure;
- (6) that consideration would be given to the Protocol to be followed for the a sensible approach to the management of Vehicle Tracking at a meeting scheduled to be held on Monday, 28 June 2010; and
- (7) otherwise note the concerns of the Trades Unions.

Note: The Executive Director of Educational Services and Martin Doran left the meeting at this point in the proceedings

TRADES UNIONS ISSUE

Restructuring and Redeployment Protocol

The Forum heard from Ms McLafferty who advised that a document entitled 'Restructuring and Redeployment Protocol' had been issued to the Senior Management Team which implied agreement with the Trades Unions. It was noted that the Trades Unions side had 3 outstanding issues of concern in relation to the Protocol as follows:-

- (a) the length of time an employee will remain on the re-deployment register;
- (b) the selection criteria being used in the Redundancy Selection Exercise; and
- (c) the number of added years offered to employees for compulsory redundancy.

Following discussion and having heard both the Trades Union side and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development in consideration of the issues, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note that management had gone through a process of consultation with the Trades Unions at the Employee Liaison Group to put in place processes which met legislative requirements, followed ACAS guidance and underpinned the organisational change policy;
- (2) to note the concerns expressed by Trades Unions representatives and Elected Members that through the process of consultation, Management had been unable to reach agreement with the Trade Unions prior to the issue of the Protocol;
- (3) to note that in view of the motion calling for no compulsory redundancy policy on the agenda for the next meeting of Council, it was expected that the issue would be a priority for the Corporate Management Team; and
- (4) that the Protocol be submitted to the next meeting of this Forum for consideration.

Thereafter, Mr Patterson distributed a copy of a report by the Executive Director of Educational Services entitled Teachers' Staffing: Absence Cover Arrangements dated February 1996. Mr Patterson advised that the report provided information on an agreement reached between Strathclyde Regional Council and the teachers' side of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) advising that a fundamental feature of the agreement is the commitment by the employer to maintain its staffing arrangements and to ensure that no teachers would be made compulsorily redundant during the period of the agreement.

STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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

- (a) Best Value
- (b) Budget Planning
- (c) Clyde Valley Shared Services
- (d) Lifelong Learning
- (e) Pay Claims
- (f) Single Status
- (g) Departmental Re-structuring
- (h) Transfer of Housing Stock
- (i) Training and Development

Health and Safety

The Forum heard from Mr Patterson in relation to a report by Brian Gourlay, Corporate Health and Safety Officer concerning the fire doors at the Vale of Leven Academy. It was noted that the report contained information on a Health and Safety Risk Assessment by BAM Construction UK Ltd which advised that the doors presented an acceptable risk.

Thereafter Mr Patterson requested that a copy of the Risk Assessment be sent to him direct.

Training and Development

The Forum heard from Charlie MacDonald in relation to the termination of employment of Council apprentices following a 4 year apprenticeship.

Having heard the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development in response, it was agreed:-

- (1) to note that at present there were no full time jobs available, however various measures would be put in place to help source employment including a guaranteed interview for any future vacant posts which arose; and
- (2) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the JCF providing an examination of the Council use of agency staff and the potential for using this funding to support future employment of apprentices.

The meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.