

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 1 April 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Margaret Bootland, Gail Casey and Jack Duffy; Tom Dick, Bill Keady, Damian McConnachie and Tom Morrison (UNISON); Duncan Borland and Donald Hamilton (GMB); George McEwan (Amicus – MSF); Harry Frew and James Fraser (UCATT); Charlie McDonald, Neil Casey and Donald McDougall (T&GWU); and Ronnie Alexander (EIS).

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

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Provost Alistair Macdonald, Councillor Jim Bollan, Norman Bissell, Jackie McMonagle, Isobel Paterson and Tom Rainey.

Councillor Margaret Bootland in the Chair

CHAIR'S REMARKS

2339 Before commencing with the business of the Meeting, the Chair, Councillor Bootland, advised of a change of Membership of the Forum. It was noted that Councillors James Flynn and Tony Devine would be replaced by Councillors Gail Casey and Jack Duffy.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2340 The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) held on 27 November 2003 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

NOTE OF INQUORATE MEETING

2341 A Note of the inquorate meeting of the Forum held on 4 March 2004 was submitted and noted.

SCHEME OF DELEGATED FUNCTIONS – INSURANCE

- 2342 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 27 November 2003 (page 418, paragraph 1301 refers), a report was submitted by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services:-
- (a) providing further information to the JCF on the 'Scheme of Delegation' in relation to the settlement of employee claims for loss of their own possessions/equipment operated by the former Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC);
 - (b) examining the extent to which this was operating in other ex-SRC Area local authorities; and
 - (c) considering possible implications for Council were it to introduce such a scheme and further considering the application of the provisions of the SNJC Craft Agreement in relation to the replacement of tools used by craft operatives.
- 2343 After discussion and having heard Mr. Douglas in further explanation, the Forum agreed that matters be continued as at present with any payments being determined on an "individual basis", following, where appropriate, consultation with departmental management.
- 2344 Mr. McDonald raised a point regarding the guidelines in the Craft Agreement and requested that a reminder be sent to all departments stating that they should abide by the terms of the Craft Agreement in relation to this issue. It was agreed that Mr. McInerney would arrange for a memorandum to be circulated on this issue to the relevant departments.
- 2345 Mr. Morrison raised a point in relation to the term "proper performance of duties" and advised the Forum that this would not only apply to Craft Operatives, but would also apply to other employees of the Council. After further discussion it was agreed that Mr. McInerney would arrange to meet with Mr. Rainey to agree a proposal for a scheme of delegated payments for losses sustained up to a certain level during the performance of duties. It was noted that the proposal would be submitted to the Corporate Management Team for approval in due course. Mr. Douglas advised that cognisance would require to be taken on the impact of any discretionary payments on the Council's insurance premium.

CONSIDERATIONS OF AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) PROTOCOL

- 2346 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 27 November 2003 (page 418, paragraph 1303 refers), the Forum heard from Mr. McInerney in respect of certain concerns that had been expressed on this issue.

- 2347 It was noted that it was the practice of the Council not to sample, audit or scrutinise the use of IT equipment due to issues of privacy, human rights and data protection.

APPROVED LIST OF CONTRACTORS

- 2348 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 27 November 2003 (page 418, paragraph 1306 refers), a briefing note was submitted by the Section Head, Property Maintenance providing information on the Council's approved list of contractors.
- 2349 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation, the Forum agreed that consideration be given to adopting the Model Constitution and Procedural Policy relating to PFI and PPP following publication of the guidelines that have been adopted by the Scottish Executive and the STUC.

SICKNESS AND INDUSTRIAL INJURY ALLOWANCES

- 2350 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 27 November 2003 (Page 422, paragraph 1335 refers), the Forum heard Mr. McNerney provide an update on this item.
- 2351 After discussion, the Forum agreed to note that Mr. McNerney would liaise with Mr. Rainey and that a joint letter would be prepared on concerns in relation to inconsistencies of approach of payment of bonus to employees who were absent from work due to industrial injury or ill health.

CLARIFICATION OF REGRADING PROVISIONS

- 2352 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 27 November 2003 (Page 423, paragraph 1339 refers), the Forum heard Mr. McNerney provide an update on this item.
- 2353 In relation to a point raised by Mr. Dick, Mr. McNerney confirmed that re-grading appeals could be dealt with irrespective of other job evaluations that were in the process of being undertaken.

INCREASING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 2354 A report was submitted by the Director of Commercial and Technical Services outlining the opportunity and benefits of providing employees of West Dunbartonshire Council with discounted opportunities to participate in physical activity at any of the Council's Indoor Leisure Facilities.

- 2355 After discussion, the Forum agreed to recommend to Council the introduction of the scheme, on the basis outlined in the Appendix to the report, in order to promote physical activity amongst employees of West Dunbartonshire Council as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to promoting employee health and wellbeing and maximising attendance.

TOBACCO USE POLICY

- 2356 A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel requesting that consideration be given to the revised Policy for tobacco use within the Council.
- 2357 After discussion, the Forum agreed:-
- (1) that further discussion would require to take place with the representatives of the Trades Unions concerning this matter; and
 - (2) that any responses to the document should be submitted to the Head of Personnel Services by 30 April 2004 at the latest.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 3 (2003/2004)

- 2358 A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services advising on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period (1 October 2003 – 31 December 2003).
- 2359 Having heard Mr. McInerney in further explanation, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

CoSLA CIRCULARS – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CIRCULARS 1/04 AND 2/04

- 2360 A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services on Industrial Relations Circulars 1/04 and 2/04 which offer guidance on discussions at national level on Local Government Employees and Teachers Conditions of Service.
- 2361 Having heard Mr. McInerney in further explanation, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

TRADES UNION RECOGNITION AND FACILITIES AGREEMENT

- 2362 A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services requesting that consideration be given to agreeing the terms of a revised Trades Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

2363 After discussion and having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that Mr. McNerney would make certain minor amendments to the document on the basis discussed; and
- (2) to note that UNISON would be discussing this matter at their next Branch meeting and that a formal response to the document would be given by their Branch Secretary in due course.

COSLA STAFFING WATCH SURVEY

2364 A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing information on the size of the Council's workforce as at 6 December 2003.

2365 Having heard Mr. McNerney in further explanation, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

4 P PLAN (PEOPLE, PROFILING, PERFORMANCE, PAY-STRUCTURES)

2366 There was submitted, and noted, a report by the Head of Personnel Services advising of an integrated approach to Employee Development, Service Plans and proposals for broad banded grading.

MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

2367 There was submitted and noted a report by the Head of Personnel Services providing copies of the minutes from departmental Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings and Health and Safety Committee meetings.

2368 In relation to a point raised by Mr. McDonald it was agreed that Mr. McNerney would liaise with the appropriate representatives in order that arrangements could be made for more frequent JCC (Catering and Cleaning) meetings to be held.

CODE OF CONDUCT

2369 In relation to this item, Mr. McNerney advised the Forum that he would circulate page 4 from the CoSLA code of conduct in due course. After discussion the Forum agreed:-

- (1) that comments on this document should be forwarded to Mr. McNerney by the end of April 2004; and

- (2) to note that UNISON would be circulating the document at their next branch meeting and that any comments arising therefrom would be communicated to Mr. McNerney in due course.

ITEMS RAISED BY TRADES UNIONS SIDE

- 2370 Mr. Alexander asked the Forum to congratulate all those involved in the Clydebank Unemployed Workers Resource Centre for achieving a Scottish Urban Regeneration Award for Best Practice following their nomination by Bill Spiers, General Secretary of the TUC.
- 2371 In relation to a point raised by Mr. Keady, the Forum discussed the reports regarding a possible merger between the Housing section and Commercial and Technical Services. Mr. McNerney confirmed that there was a commitment for this to happen and stated that any proposals would be circulated to the Trades Unions for consultation at the appropriate time. The position was noted.
- 2372 In relation to a point raised by Mr. McDonald, the Forum noted the concerns that had been expressed in relation to personal information on Council employees that had been published on a website.

STANDING ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 2373 After discussion and having heard Mr McNerney, the Forum agreed to note the current position of the standing items of business, namely Best Value, Budget Planning, Absence, Health and Safety and Training and Development.
- 2374 In particular, the following items were discussed:

Appeals Committee Hearings

- 2375 It was noted that one appeal had been heard on 8 March 2004 and that at present there were two appeals outstanding.
- 2376 In relation to a point raised by Mr. Frew, it was noted that Mr. McNerney would clarify the position relating to a grievance appeal that was outstanding and had been submitted approximately two and a half years ago.

Single Status

- 2377 Mr. McNerney advised the Forum that the deadline of 1 April 2004 for the introduction of the job evaluation scheme was not going to be achieved. It was noted that the Single Status Working Group would demonstrate a commitment to introducing the scheme before April 2005.

McCrone Recommendations

- 2378 The Forum heard Mr. Dick provide an update on the progress of this item and the position was noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 2379 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday 24 June 2004 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 10.00 a.m. on the same day.

The meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.