

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 14 November 2002 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Mary Collins, Daniel McCafferty, Ronnie McColl and Connie O'Sullivan; Jackaleen McMonagle (Amicus – MSF); Ronald Alexander (EIS); Michael Conroy and Arthur Rennie (GMB); James Morrison (SSTA); Charlie McDonald, Peter McNicol and David Stark (T&GWU); Harry Frew and James Fraser (UCATT); and Tom Dick, Isabel Paterson, Tom Rainey and Kathleen Ryall (UNISON).

Attending: Gerry McNerney, Head of Personnel; and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors James McCallum and Ian McDonald; Norman Bissell (EIS); Donald Hamilton (GMB); Margaret Ferris, Damian McConnachie and Tom Morrison (UNISON).

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Tom Morrison, it was agreed that the meeting be chaired by Councillor Collins (Vice-Chair).

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Messrs. Charlie McDonald (Convenor, Manual & Craft Stewards) and Alex Rennie (Vice-Convenor, Manual & Craft Stewards) were welcomed to their first meeting as Members of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF).

Having heard the Chair, Councillor Collins, it was agreed that the following item submitted by the trades union side be taken at this point in the meeting.

EMERGENCY MOTION – FIRE SERVICE DISPUTE

The Chair, Councillor Collins, read out an emergency motion which had been submitted by the trades union side in the following terms:-

The Joint Consultative Forum of West Dunbartonshire Council expresses its support for our colleagues within the Fire Brigade Union who are currently involved in industrial action in support of a fair wage.

The Forum further calls upon the national employer to enter into constructive and realistic negotiations with a view to achieving an acceptable early settlement of the dispute.

The JCF unanimously agreed to approve the motion.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Forum held on 4 July 2002 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

In relation to a point raised by Councillor O'Sullivan concerning the number of outstanding appeals, it was agreed that appropriate action would be taken in terms of identifying ways to fast track appeal cases and that, in the meantime, this item be made a standing item of business on the agenda of the Forum.

DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR OFFICER/MEMBER RELATIONS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Forum held on 4 July 2002, a report was resubmitted by the Head of Personnel seeking the views of the JCF on a proposed protocol for officer/Member relations.

After discussion, the Forum agreed to approve the draft protocol subject to the following amendment/addition:-

- (a) that Paragraph 14.1 of the protocol be amended to read "The Chief Executive or the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Senior Press Officer, will issue press releases and similar information on behalf of the Council, deal with media enquiries and implement the Council's Public Relations policies"; and
- (b) that an addition to the protocol be made concerning the requirement to consult with the trades unions on any issues that may affect them.

ROLE OF JOINT SECRETARIES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Forum held on 4 July 2002, a report was resubmitted by the Head of Personnel on the role of the Joint Secretaries within the JCF.

Having heard Mr. McInerney and after discussion, the Forum agreed to approve the role of Joint Secretaries on the basis outlined in the report.

PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Forum held on 4 July 2002, a report was resubmitted by the Head of Personnel seeking the views of the JCF on a draft framework for performance and development planning within the Council.

Having heard Mr. McInerney in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed to approve the proposed performance and development planning framework.

JOINT TRADE UNION CONSULTATIVE GROUP

A report was submitted by the Joint Secretaries requesting that the JCF agree to the establishment of a Joint Trade Union Consultative (JTUC) Group.

Having heard Mr. Rainey, the Forum agreed to the establishment of a Joint Trade Union Consultative Group and that seven Members be nominated to serve on the Group, namely Arthur Rennie (GMB), Tom Rainey (UNISON), Charles McDonald (T&GWU), Ronald Alexander (EIS), Jackaleen McMonagle (Amicus), James Fraser (UCATT) and James Morrison (SSTA). It was noted that the JTUC Group would be chaired by Ms. McMonagle.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION SCHEME

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel requesting that the JCF nominate Trade Union representatives to participate in the Judging Panel for Employee Recognition Awards.

Having heard Mr. McInerney in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed that the seven trades union representatives who serve on the JTUC Group would form a pool of employee representatives who could be called upon to participate in the judging panel. It was noted that the judging panel was likely to meet on at least 4 occasions per annum, the first meeting of which was expected in January 2003.

CoSLA - INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CIRCULARS 2/02 AND 3/02

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel requesting that the JCF note the terms of Industrial Relations Circulars 2/02 and 3/02 received from CoSLA.

In relation to a point raised by Councillor McColl concerning Car and Subsistence Allowance, it was noted from Circular 2/02 that there would be no national scheme, and local schemes should be put in place, it being for each local authority to develop its own scheme.

The Forum agreed:-

- (a) to note, with concern, the considerable delay and uncertainty which has taken place in respect of this matter; and
- (b) to seek to establish an agreement on compensation payments to support the introduction of the Council's scheme based on Inland Revenue rates of reimbursement.

Otherwise, it was agreed that the contents of the report be noted.

CIRCULAR SJC/13 - JOB EVALUATION, INTERIM APPEALS MECHANISM

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel requesting that the JCF agree to the establishment of a local grading panel to consider grading appeals.

After discussion and having heard Messrs. Rainey and McInerney, the Forum agreed:-

- (a) to the establishment of a local grading appeals panel based on the former manual workers grading appeals structure and procedures; and
- (b) that 6 Trade Union representatives be nominated to form a pool of employee representatives on the panel, namely Michael Conroy and Arthur Rennie (GMB), Tom Rainey and Tom Dick (UNISON), Charles McDonald and one other representative to be nominated (T&GWU).

SINGLE STATUS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel advising of developments within the Single Status agreement.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

MINUTES OF DEPARTMENTAL JCC's AND SAFETY MEETINGS

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

In relation to a point raised by Mr. Alexander concerning the Minutes of Meeting of the JCC – Teachers held on 19 September 2002 with particular regard to the Matters Arising part of the Minute bearing the sub-heading "National Insurance 1997-98", the Forum agreed to note that Mr. McInerney would arrange to investigate this matter further with a view to a report being prepared and submitted to the next meeting of the Forum thereon.

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 the standing items of business, namely Best Value, Budget Planning, McCrone Recommendations, Absence, Health and Safety and Training and Development.

In particular, the following items were discussed.

Best Value

The Forum heard a report from Ms. McMonagle, who serves on the Best Value Development Group, and whose role is to give the trades union position and perspective on Best Value Reviews. After discussion, the JCF noted the current position in relation thereto and it was also noted that the trades union representatives played a key role in the review process. Having heard Mr. McNerney, it was noted that appropriate adjustments would be made to the Best Value tool kit to clarify the position of trades union representatives in respect of matters pertaining to service reviews, etc.

Health & Safety

Housing Officers/Caretakers – Bellsmyre

An issue concerning Housing Officers/Caretakers in Bellsmyre was raised by Mr. Conroy. It was noted that the Community Safety Partnership would be the most appropriate way to address the concerns that had been discussed.

Evacuation Procedures

The matter of Evacuation Procedures, in light of the on-going fire service dispute, was raised by Mr. McDonald. It was noted that this issue would be raised at the meeting of the Corporate Safety Committee which was due to be held on the following week.

Having heard Mr. McDonald it was noted that, in the event that the fire service dispute was still proceeding, it would be his intention to consider recommending to the December meeting of Council that Members allow for the inclusion/involvement of a trades union representative on the Emergency Planning Team, which would assist in information sharing.

Asbestos – Voluntary Lung Testing, etc.

The issue of voluntary lung testing linked to asbestos was then raised by Mr. McDonald. A forthcoming Conference on Asbestos, which would be held in Stirling and would be addressed by key speakers of West Dunbartonshire Council, was discussed also and the position was noted.

The lung testing matter was still under discussion at Departmental level. In addition the Forum agreed that the steps already taken by the Council had been very positive and constructive. As a consequence of this, other authorities were following West Dunbartonshire Council's lead on this most crucial issue. It was considered that it would be desirable for a policy framework to be produced on the Council's approach to the problems caused by asbestos, which would also cover issues specific to voluntary lung testing and training, etc.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Manual/Craft Operatives – Christmas Pay

Mr. Frew raised the issue of multiple pays for Manual/Craft Operatives during the Christmas and New Year period. Concerns existed on the provision of 4 pays on 19 December 2002 and no further pay until 16 January 2003. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. McInerney would take this matter up with the Manager of Exchequer in order to ascertain the position in relation thereto.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 20 February 2003 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 4.05 p.m.