

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 1 March 2007 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Margaret Bootland and Tony Devine; Denise McLafferty, Bill Keady and Tom Dick (UNISON); Jackaleen McMonagle (AMICUS); Neil Casey and Brian Courtney (T&GWU); Duncan Borland (GMB); Alex McEwan (SSTA) and Stewart Paterson (EIS).

Attending: David McMillan, Chief Executive; Ronnie Dinnie, Acting Director, Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Land and Environmental Services); Tricia O'Neill, Head of Personnel Services; Bob Davidson, Section Head, Facilities Management; Alan Douglas, Manager of Best Value and Special Projects and Shona Barton, Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Provost Alistair Macdonald, Councillor Gail Casey, Margaret Ferris, Charlie Macdonald, Mick Conroy and Norman Bissell.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Forum noted that in terms of the constitution there was a requirement for a nomination of Chair of the Forum. It was agreed that Margaret Ferris (UNISON) be nominated as Chair of the Forum.

The Forum then agreed that Councillor Tony Devine be nominated as Vice Chair. The Forum agreed that in the absence of the Chair, Margaret Ferris, the meeting would be chaired by the Vice Chair, Councillor Tony Devine. Accordingly Councillor Devine assumed the Chair.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the JCF held on 28 November 2006, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

REGRADING PANEL

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 28 November 2006 (Page 2848, paragraph 10745 refers), the Forum was reminded of the decision that a report be submitted to this meeting on this issue, following consultation with the CMT.

The Forum heard from the Head of Personnel Services who advised that the regrading panel had been reinstated following the concerns of the Trade Unions and would be meeting on 20 March 2007.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND CONTRACTS FOR NEW STARTS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 28 November 2006 (Page 2848, paragraph 10747 refers), the Forum was reminded of the decision that the Head of Personnel would look into these issues and report back to this meeting.

The Head of Personnel Services advised that she had been unable to obtain any clarity on this issue from the Trade Unions.

Following discussion and having heard Ms. McLafferty and the Chief Executive, the Forum noted:-

- (1) that the contracts which were recently issued in Housing and Regeneration Services were part of a long ongoing process; and
- (2) that any changes to terms and conditions should now be made through the single status process.

NO SMOKING POLICY

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 28 November 2006 (Page 2850, paragraphs 10757 and 10758 refers), the Forum was reminded of the decision that the Head of Social Work Services (Operations) would be invited to this meeting to address the issue of smoking in Council Care Homes and the issue of parking restrictions.

The Forum was asked to note that the Head of Social Work Services (Operations) was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment, but a briefing note had been prepared and this was circulated to all in attendance.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the briefing note, and it was agreed that the Trade Unions would bring any further concerns back to a future meeting of the Forum.

OUTSTANDING GRIEVANCES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 28 November 2006 (Page 2849, paragraph 10755 refers), a report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing an update on the position with regard to outstanding grievances.

Having heard the Head of Personnel Services in answer to Members' questions the Forum agreed to note:-

- (1) the contents of the report;
- (2) that there were a number of areas of concern with regard to the setup of the Appeals Committee;
- (3) that a working group had been formed by Personnel Services to look into the whole Appeals process.

DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE INFORMATION

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing figures for discipline and grievance appeals held at departmental level (stage 2) for the quarterly period 1 October 2006 – 31 December 2006.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

The Forum heard from Mr. Douglas who provided an update on Appeals Committee hearings.

The Forum noted that since the JCF held on 28 November 2006 1 dismissal appeal had been heard, 1 dismissal appeal had been withdrawn and 6 grievance appeals had been submitted. It was further noted that at the present time there was 1 dismissal appeal outstanding and 15 grievance appeals outstanding.

Mr. Douglas advised the Forum that Equal Pay grievances were not included in these figures and it was noted that these would be heard by a special appeals panel. The Forum noted that every effort would be made to hear as many appeals as possible before the elections in May.

CORPORATE EYECARE PROCEDURES

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing an update on proposed revisions to the Council's current procedures for eyesight tests for employees who are (habitual) display screen equipment (DSE) users and require spectacles exclusively for use with display screen equipment.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Personnel Services in answer to Members' questions the Forum agreed to continue this item until the next meeting of the Forum to allow for the comments from the Trade Unions to be taken into consideration at which time a further report would be submitted.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER – DECEMBER) 2006/2007

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services advising on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period 1 October 2006 to 31 December 2006.

The Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

SCOTTISH JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES SJC/31 – STATEMENT ON TRADE UNION RECRUITMENT

A copy of a statement from the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees regarding Trade Union recruitment was submitted to the Forum for information.

The Forum noted the contents of the statement.

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

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services providing the Minutes from Departmental Joint Consultative Committees and Health and Safety meetings.

Having heard the Chair, Councillor Devine, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

TRADE UNION ISSUES

The following items were considered at the request of the Trade Unions:-

(a) Delay in setting date for Regrading Panel to meet.

The Forum agreed that this item had been covered previously in the agenda.

(b) Departments convening ‘case conferences’ without any discussion with trade unions regards change to procedures.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive, it was agreed that this matter would be discussed with the Corporate Management Team and that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum.

(c) Paid time off to attend trade union conferences.

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

- (1) to note that there was concern over the lack of consistency of approach from departments;
- (2) that the Head of Personnel Services would meet with the Trade Union convenors to discuss the implementation of the Trade Union facilities agreement; and
- (3) that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Forum on this issue.

Having heard Mr. Douglas, the Forum agreed that the Trade Unions would endeavour in future to supply items for the agenda of the JCF in a report format.

STANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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

- (i) Appeals Committee Hearings
- (ii) Best Value
- (iii) Budget Planning
- (iv) McCrone Recommendations
- (v) Absence

Health and safety

The Forum heard from Mr. Patterson who advised of concerns over the standard of cleanliness in some secondary schools within the Council. After extensive discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members’ questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note that the Chief Executive had given an undertaking to look into this issue;
- (2) that the Section Head, Facilities Management would investigate the possibility of alternative working arrangements/shift patterns for cleaners in schools; and
- (3) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum providing information on:-
 - (i) the scheme of working in Renfrewshire Council, where a system of night and late working is in operation for cleaners; and
 - (ii) the problems being experienced by the Council in recruiting staff to these posts.

Training and Development

The Forum heard from Councillor Bootland who advised that Clydebank College would be giving a presentation to the Senior Management Network on 22 March 2007 on employee training opportunities including information on fee waivers and funding. The Forum noted this information.

The Forum heard from Mr. Casey who advised of issues with the lack of corporate induction and corporate health and safety briefings being given to new staff in his department. The Forum noted that Mr. Casey would meet with the Acting Director of HR&ES (Land and Environmental Services) following this meeting to discuss this issue.

Single Status

The Forum heard from the Head of Personnel Services who provided an update on the trial of a matching document within some departments. It was noted that this issue would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Pay Modernisation Group.

COUNCILLORS' REMARKS

The Forum heard from Councillor Bootland who expressed her thanks to the members for their help and support over the last four years. Councillor Devine also expressed his thanks for the patience shown by the Forum and wished the members every success for the future.

Members of the Forum responded in appropriate terms.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on Thursday, 21 June 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 3.40 p.m.