



CORPORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, DUFFRYN HOUSE, DUFFRYN
BUSINESS PARK ON TUESDAY, 10TH JULY 2007 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT:

E. Gibbs (UNISON) - Chairman
Councillor G.R. Price - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D.T. Davies, D.T. Hardacre, D.V. Poole, Mrs. B.M. Toomer, R. Woodyatt

Together with:

S. Rosser (Chief Executive), A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment), D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), A. Williams (Assistant Director - Resourcing and Performance), J. Powell (Personnel Manager - Employee Services), K. Evans (Personnel Manager - Policy and Performance), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives: -

B. Barrowman (GMB), Mrs. P. Baldwin and Mrs. L. Woodland (Unison) and D. Bezzina (Unison Regional Organiser), Mrs. J. Shelton (Joint Unions), P. Jones (AMICUS), M.J. Payne (GMB), and J.T. Toner (TGWU).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E.K. Griffiths and G. Jones, G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), G. Wright (Head of Support Services), A. Jones (TGWU) and Ms. A. Stevens (ASCL).

1. MR. JOHN POWELL - PERSONNEL MANAGER

The Chairman advised the Committee that John Powell was shortly to leave the Council's employment and that this was the last meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee which he would attend.

Mr. Powell was thanked for the valued advice and guidance he had given over many years and for always dealing with matters in a professional and helpful manner. He was wished every success and happiness for the future.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES - 17TH APRIL 2007

RESOLVED that subject to the inclusion of Councillor R. Woodyatt in the list of those who had tendered their apologies, the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman: -

Minutes of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 17th April 2007 (minute nos. 1 - 16 on page nos. 1 - 5).

MATTERS ARISING

4. Bonus Review Update (minute no. 8)

Trade Union members asked if staff had been informed and were advised that the details had not yet been circulated and would be in due course.

5. Christmas Closedown 2007 (minute no. 12)

A query was raised in relation to the arrangements for staffing in certain service areas over the closedown period and it was reported that Heads of Service would be discussing local arrangements.

MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

6. Minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee

The minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 13th April 2007 were received and noted.

7. Minutes of the Chief Executives Directorate Joint Consultative Committee

The minutes of the Chief Executives Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 4th June 2007 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

8. Flexible Retirement (minute no. 3(ii))

It was noted that the minute should read Flexible Retirement and not Flexible Working as recorded and that this would be corrected at the next meeting of the Directorate Joint Consultative Committee.

9. Customer First Contact Centre (minute no. 6.1)

Mrs. Baldwin wish to recorded her appreciation for the level of consultation undertaken with both staff and the Unions in relation to the move to the Contact Centre.

10. Minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee

The minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 13th June 2007 were received and noted.

MATTER ARISING

11. VER/Redundancy Policy (minute no. 6)

Mr. Payne indicated that the current policy would need to be reviewed in light of recent policy and regulations which have been circulated and it was noted that this would be undertaken as required.

12. Minutes of the Directorate of the Environment Joint Consultative Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Directorate of the Environment Joint Consultative Committee held on 20th June 2007 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

13. Budget Update (minute no. 4.1.1)

A query was raised as to whether the Newsletter had been circulated to staff and it was noted that it had been sent as agreed at the Directorate Joint Consultative Committee. It was pointed out that not all of the relevant staff appear to have received the document and accepted that there is a need to distinguish between the process for formal communications and the more general Newsletter to ensure there is a consistency of approach in relaying information to the staff concerned.

14. Schedule of Rates (minute no. 7)

It was pointed out that whilst the introduction of a new schedule of rates had caused conflict between the Unions and Management this has now been resolved and all parties are working more closely together

15. JOB EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr. J. Powell (Personnel Manager - Employee Services) gave a verbal update in relation to job evaluation and indicated that a meeting had been held with the Trade Unions on 25th June 2007 to outline the current position and discuss the pay structure. He confirmed that apart from some posts in Education that had only recently been identified by the Directorate as having to be evaluated, all of the evaluations have now been completed and that further discussion are to be held with the Trade Unions on 16th July 2007 to progress matters in relation to the pay structure and the pay modelling exercise. As previously agreed, following the initial meeting, a joint bulletin had been issued to staff giving details of the current position, and this practice will continue.

A brief discussion took place in relation to the establishment of a pay line and it was anticipated that this information would be available by the end of August.

16. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

The Union representatives expressed concern that with the exception of the Contact Centre there appeared to be a general lack of consultation. Specific reference was made to proposals within both the inclusion and home care services and with regards to the latter, Mrs. Baldwin indicated that the Unions felt they had been informed and not consulted and as a result had taken their concerns directly to Cabinet members. Mr. A. Williams (Assistant Director - Resourcing and Performance) indicated that he believed that there had been consultation but felt that the matter needed to be dealt with outside the meeting and indicated that he would have been happy to meet the representatives to discuss the matter if required.

Mr. S. Rosser (Chief Executive) noted the action that had been taken and pointed out that there are correct management procedures to be followed and requested that in the event of similar problems being experienced in the future he should be personally advised in order that he can take the necessary action and, would if necessary, arrange to discuss the issues with the relevant Cabinet member(s).

Reference was then made to inclusion services and to the failure of the Department to respond to a number of queries which have been raised during the course of the consultation process. Concerns were also expressed at the lateness of correspondence to the term time staff concerned in relation to their contracts and to the restriction in the ability to negotiate. Mr. D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure) indicated that he was not aware of the issues raised and would need to consult the Officer concerned before he could make a response.

It was agreed that in future if there are any issues which are to be raised during the course of the meeting Officers should be advised in advance in order that the matter can be investigated and a response be available at the meeting.

Mr. D. Hopkins then made reference to the consultation on the proposed management restructure within education and leisure and it was noted that one of the Teaching Unions had already responded. It was pointed out that all Unions should have been consulted and Mr. Hopkins indicated that if this had not already been done, he would arrange for a copy to be circulated.

17. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS/SHARED SERVICES

Mr. N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services) gave an update on progress with the Shared Services Project and confirmed that the project is now concluding its second phase and as such the outline business case for the service areas of human resources, payroll and training is being progressed. The recommendations from PriceWaterhouseCooper should be available by the middle of the month.

He indicated that the timetable is particularly tight and once the Steering Group have deliberated on its content (19th July), the report will then be referred to the individual authorities for consideration. They will then be in a position to take informed decisions on whether to embark on the implementation of Shared Services and within that project, which services to share and at that stage extensive consultation with Trade Unions would be required. There would then be a special meeting of the Steering Group to sign off the report and a special meeting of the Connecting South East Wales Board in September to discuss the recommendations of the Steering Group.

With regard to trade union involvement, Mr. M. Payne reported that the Welsh Local Government Association are taking the lead on a national level with the recognised trade unions and that arising from concerns over the lack of consultation on a regional basis, it had been suggested that representatives should be allowed to sit on the Project Board. This proposal was accepted by Connecting South East Wales Board and a meeting has been scheduled for 25th July 2007 to progress the proposals. He explained that the Trade Union involvement is being co-ordinated via regional officers and that there will be a Trade Union Board to discuss agenda items and each member will feedback to their own local authority. In relation to the timetable, he also agreed that the timescales are particularly tight and noted that there would be consultation with Trade Unions once details are available.

It was accepted that certain of the functional areas included in the scope would be progressed and reference was then made to the potential human resource implications of any proposals subsequently agreed and the requirement to ensure that the necessary training is undertaken was stressed. Mr. N. Barnett reported that there had been a meeting yesterday to receive details on emerging findings and models and issues relating to human resources, training and finance had been discussed at that time. It had been accepted that while some of the modeling has been undertaken, detailed consideration would need to be given to these specific areas.

Mr. S. Rosser then referred to discussions within the Connecting South East Wales Board and noted its agreement to involve Trade Unions representatives. He referred to the need to ensure that all parties are fully aware of the ongoing discussions and pointed out that whilst the county borough can communicate with its staff, suggested that there should be a more regional approach to ensure there is consistency of the information being presented.

18. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Mr. S. Rosser detailed progress on the development of the new building and referred to contractual discussions as to the completion date. He confirmed that there would continue to be an opportunity for further meetings to discuss a range of issues and any concerns raised by both staff and the Trade Unions in relation to the implications of some of the changes.

During the course of the debate, Mrs. P. Baldwin made reference to lack of consultation with the Trade Unions and referred specifically to a recent visit to a building when the representatives had been advised they were there as observers and any questions raised had been curtailed as having previously been dealt with.

Mr. N. Barnett indicated that he was disappointed with the feedback from the meeting as it had been intended to act as both an information sharing and consultation exercise and reported that he would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised further at the next Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Mr. S. Rosser indicated that there have been ongoing discussions with staff in the relevant areas and via the Focus Group and that there would be opportunities for further meetings to discuss a range of issues and any concerns raised by both staff and the Trade Unions in relation to the implications of some of the changes. There have also been regular information bulletins to staff to advise them of progress. It was pointed out however, that in order to progress the contract, certain decisions have already been taken and as such are not offered for consultation or negotiation.

Reference was then made to the need to review the general relocation package (which has been in existence since 1997) and to the undertaking given that there would be a meeting to progress the matter. It was noted that this meeting has not yet been convened and would be in due course. In the meantime, Mr. D. Bezzina requested that a copy of the current agreement be circulated to all representatives and Mr. A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment) suggested that consideration should also be given to travel plans at that time.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 24TH OCTOBER 2007

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 9th October 2007. Special meetings would be convened as and when required.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2007 they were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.