



CORPORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON THURSDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY 2005 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews MBE., D.T. Davies, D. Hardacre and D. Poole

Together with:

S. Rosser (Deputy Chief Executive), J. Wakley (Head of Personnel), J. Powell (Personnel Manager – Employee Services), R. Gough (Personnel Manager – Standards and Development), G. Wright (Head of Support Services), J. Hold (Acting Assistant Director of Social Services – Resourcing and Performance), D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure) and Mrs K. Wall (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives

B. Barrowman (GMB), A. Jones (TGWU), Mrs P. Baldwin (UNISON), Ms A. Stevens (SHA) and M. Jackson (Trade Union Job Evaluation Co-ordinator)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Ford, G. Jones, E.K. Griffiths and R. Woodyatt and Messrs J. Toner (TGWU), M. Payne (GMB), L. McInnes (UNISON) and G. Smith (AMICUS).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman -

Minutes of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 22nd September 2004.

3. MATTERS ARISING

- (a) **Minute No 3(a) – Pay Scales – Home Carers** – Mr Wakley (Head of Personnel) reported that a ballot had been held with home carers regarding the new structure and that the results had indicated that the majority of responses had been positive. Mr Hold (Acting Assistant of Social Services – Resourcing and Performance) also reported that new contracts were currently being prepared.

Cabinet Members wished to place on record their gratitude to Officers and Trade Union representatives involved in the successful resolution of this issue.

- (b) **Minute No 3(b) – TUPE Plus Agreement** – Mr Wakley reported that the National Employers Guidance on TUPE Plus Agreements was still awaited. He also reported that he had prepared a draft report for the Human Resources Strategy Group on this subject and he agreed to circulate a copy of this report to the Trade Union representatives.
- (c) **Minute No 3(c) – Street Cleansing Dispute** – Cabinet Members commended the work undertaken by Officers and Trade Union representatives in resolving the street cleansing dispute.
- (d) **JNC For Chief Officers – Stress Survey** – Mr Wakley reported that the analysis of responses to the JNC Stress Survey was not yet available but would be reported to a future meeting.

4. MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

- (a) **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 15th December 2004 were received and noted.

Matters Arising

Minute No 6 – Bonus Review – reference was made to the ongoing discussions regarding the review of bonus payments and Mr Wright (Head of Support Services) agreed to progress this matter.

Minute No 7.1 – GMB Branch Secretary Office Accommodation – reference was made to the fact that the GMB Branch Secretary's office accommodation at the Penmaen Depot had been demolished and that alternative accommodation had not yet been provided.

Mr Gough (Personnel Manager – Standards and Development) reported that Mr Lambie (Corporate Property Manager) was in the process of identifying alternative locations and he also reported that the Trade Union room at Tir-y-berth was available for use.

Cabinet members acknowledged the need to provide suitable alternative accommodation and Mr Wright agreed to progress the issue.

- (b) **Minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee**

The minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 28th January 2005 were received and noted.

5. JOB EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr Powell (Personnel Manager – Employee Services) provided a verbal update and feedback in respect of the pilot job evaluation exercise. He also reported that the full job evaluation exercise had started that day and that in consultation with employees, management and trade unions, one service from each Directorate had been selected to initiate the process.

The Chairman thanked Mr Powell for his update and introduced and welcomed Mr M. Jackson (Trade Union Job Evaluation Co-ordinator), who had been invited to the meeting to update the Committee on his involvement in the job evaluation process.

Mr Jackson reported that he was currently working closely with the Job Analysts in respect of agreeing 'local conventions' and he made particular reference to the good working relationship that he had developed with Mr Powell and his staff.

The Committee noted the information provided and members were also informed that a joint Council and Trade Union Job Evaluation Information Bulletin would be circulated to all staff in March.

6. PENSION CHANGES 2005 AND 2008

The Committee considered the report that outlined the present position in relation to the changes being made to the Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from April 2005 and which also summarised the possible proposed changes to the scheme to be made in 2008, currently the subject of consultation.

Mr Wakley reported that there had been considerable unrest over the proposed changes and that a number of Trade Unions at a national level had indicated their intention to take industrial action against the changes.

It was noted that UNISON had already given formal notification of its intention to hold a ballot regarding strike action and Mr Wakley reported that since preparation of the report, he had received similar notification from other Unions including UCATT, Transport and General Workers Union and AMICUS.

During discussion, Mrs Baldwin (UNISON representative) circulated copies of a report entitled, 'Frequently asked Questions on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)' and of a letter the UNISON Group of Labour Assembly Members had sent to the Rt Hon John Prescott MP conveying concern about the Government's proposals to amend the rules affecting the LGPS.

The Committee noted the report and agreed that a joint communication strategy explaining the impact of the changes proposed for 2008 should be produced.

7. BUDGET 2005/2006

Consideration was given to a Cabinet report entitled 'Revenue and Capital Budgets 2005/06' that had been considered by Cabinet on 15th February and which would be submitted to Council later that day.

Mr Rosser (Deputy Chief Executive) presented the report and outlined details of the inflationary costs included, including those relating to pay awards, superannuation costs and job evaluation.

He also reported that within the Revenue Settlement Grant, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) had made clear its expectation that Councils would seek to identify cash releasing efficiency savings over the next few years and that for 2005/06, a 1% target had been set.

It was noted that the Council always sought to identify efficiency savings as part of its budget strategy, but that given the pressures and financial constraints, this did not always result in cash releasing savings, but meant that the Council had to do more with existing resources.

The WAG had also made it clear that efficiency savings rather than cuts would need to be demonstrated. Mr Rosser indicated that given the make up of local government budgets this would be difficult to achieve in the short term and he reported that in a discussion with the Schools Budget Forum, the school representatives had indicated that the proposal was unrealistic in the school context and had agreed that WAG should be advised accordingly.

Given this situation, the report proposed that a 0.5% efficiency saving be applied across all services (including schools), but Mr Rosser highlighted the need for further efficiency savings targets in future years and the need for the Council to consider appropriate robust mechanisms to take this forward during 2005/06.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rosser for the information provided and invited comments and questions from Committee members.

The Trade Union representatives indicated that they were pleased that the report recommended efficiency savings of 0.5% rather than the 1% proposed by the WAG, but emphasised the need for the administration and management to work closely with the Trade Unions to minimise any staff reductions and fully examine options such as redeployment and secondments.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Craft Trade Unions Pay Settlement

A Trade Union representative referred to the fact that the pay settlement in respect of the Craft Unions had been agreed and asked when staff would receive payment. Mr Wakley reported that the Council had not yet received official notification of the settlement, but he agreed to make enquiries and progress the issue.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next quarterly meeting of the Committee would be held in April at a date and time to be agreed with the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.