



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN
ON TUESDAY, 24TH JANUARY 2006 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D.T. Davies, E.K. Griffiths, D.T. Hardacre, G. Jones, D.V. Poole, R. Woodyatt.

Together with:

M. Davies (Chief Executive), S. Rosser (Deputy Chief Executive), D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), G. Wright (Head of Support Services), J. Powell (Personnel Manager - Employee Services), K. Evans (Personnel Manager - Policy and Performance), A. Heaney (Assistant Director - Resourcing and Performance), J. Lawrence (Head of Inclusion Services), T. Reardon (Principal Personnel Officer), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer).

Trade Union Representatives

B. Barrowman (GMB), Mrs. P. Baldwin (UNISON), D. Bezzina (Unison Regional Organiser), A. Jones (TGWU), Mrs. J. Havard (NUT), C. Vickers (NAS/UWT), J.T. Toner (TGWU) and M. Jackson (Trade Union Job Evaluation Co-ordinator).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P.D. Ford, Mr. R. Webb (Director of the Environment), Mr. J. Howsam (Director of Social Services), Mr. M.J. Payne (GMB) and Ms. A. Stevens (SHA).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES - 11TH OCTOBER 2006

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

Minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 11th October 2005 (minute nos. 1 - 16 on page nos. 1 - 5).

MATTERS ARISING

3. Pension Changes 2005 and 2008 (minute no. 6)

Mrs. Baldwin (Unison) referred to ongoing consultations on the draft regulations (which ends on 28th February 2006), gave an update on the negotiations and highlighted the campaign to seek fair and equal treatment for members of the local government pension scheme. She confirmed that ballot papers will be circulated to all Unison members on 14th February 2006 with a view to industrial action being taken sometime in March. It was confirmed that a similar exercise is being undertaken by other trade unions.

MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

4. Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee - 5th October 2005

The minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 5th October 2005 were received and noted.

5. Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee - 28th November 2005

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

MATTER ARISING

6. Assistant Director, Children's Services (minute no. 3)

It was confirmed that following the receipt of applications and the subsequent assessment process it had been agreed to re-advertise the position.

7. Directorate of the Environment Joint Consultative Committee - 5th January 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the Directorate of the Environment Joint Consultative Committee held on 5th January 2006 were received and noted.

8. JOB EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr. G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development) gave an update on the Hay exercise and reported that as previously agreed all new posts or those substantially changed since the initial exercise have been evaluated (apart from one post which has only recently been created).

He confirmed that the appeals process should be completed by the end of next week and indicated that a report is in the process of being prepared for consideration by Cabinet confirming the proposed implementation date of 1st April 2006 as originally planned.

Mr. J. Powell (Personnel Manager - Employee Services) gave an update on the current position in relation to the GLPC job evaluation scheme and indicated that the team is still

working towards the completion of evaluations by 28th February 2006. He confirmed that Officers have met with staff within Engineering and Trading Standards to discuss their concerns over the process.

He reported that a paper had been sent to the Trade Unions concerning the principles of a possible pay structure which would sit alongside the results of the job evaluation process and pointed out that in the discussions that had followed, although the Trade Unions did not agree with everything in the paper it had been agreed that further discussions should take place.

The Trade Union representatives stated that they were concerned that the process was being moved along too quickly and that more time was required to ensure that evaluations were undertaken properly and that there was sufficient time to discuss other issues. They were also of the view that schools support staff should be part of the main evaluation process and not be added as a separate group later.

They then put forward the view that perhaps the implementation date should be put back to later in the year and that the original date of 1st April 2006 should no longer stand. The Chairman noted that this would cause difficulties because of the commitment made to implement from 1st April 2006 and the possible knock on effect to the Hay evaluation process.

The Trade Unions raised the issue of back pay prior to 1st April 2006 relating to equal pay but this was seen by the council as a separate issue from the main job evaluation exercise. The issue of how the job evaluation exercise and back payments would be funded was discussed and SR stated that sufficient resources would be found for job evaluation but that the issue of back pay was being looked at nationally with the Welsh Local Government Association and the Welsh Assembly Government.

It was agreed that an urgent meeting of the Job Evaluation Steering Group be held to discuss the various issues raised and that defined terms of reference including timescales be determined in order that its aims and objectives can be identified and progressed with a view to the evaluation being effective from 1st April 2006.

9. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Concerns were again expressed that in some areas reorganisation/restructuring has been progressed without the trade unions being advised at the initial stage and a request was made that the consultation be undertaken at the earliest stages in order that staff can be approached for their views.

Specific reference was made to the remodelling of Inclusion Services and to the fact that the trade unions had not been advised of a proposed meeting with the staff until the day before and as such, they had not had the opportunity to discuss the proposed changes with those involved.

Mrs. J. Lawrence (Head of Inclusion Services) circulated a report which detailed the processes which had been followed and highlighted the rationale for the changes. She confirmed that the process for the remodelling review had been via the Caerphilly Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group, Members, Unions, GMB, Headteacher Unions and LEA Officers. Regular updates have also been provided at Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings.

It was noted that staff within Inclusion Services had been consulted in September last year and there had been consultation with individuals and groups of staff and discussions with the Unions. Specific issues which had arisen during the course of the process (term time contact, additional support criteria, employment contract, annual leave and flexi leave) have been considered and addressed. She pointed out however that a confidential draft document,

which was not intended for general circulation, had been subsequently copied by a member of staff and circulated to colleagues and the Trade Union. It is assumed that the content of this document has caused the concerns raised.

Mr. C. Vickers (NAS/UWT) raised concerns at the consultation process for the remodeling of the service, the proposed deadline for implementation and lack of unions involvement. It was agreed that he meet with Mr. Hopkins and Mrs. Lawrence following the meeting to discuss those issues.

Reference was also made to the proposals to make amendments to the door-to-door rent collection service (in that it would only be made available to tenants of sheltered housing complexes and recipients of the DLA Care or Mobility or Attendance Allowance) and to the lack of communication with the staff that are involved with the process.

It was noted that a report submitted to the Living Environment Scrutiny Committee on 17th January 2006 had confirmed that the proposals had been discussed with the Tenants Participation Forum and with the Rent Collectors (who have suggested an alternative approach which had been incorporated therein) and that their views had been expressed in the document.

The Chairman noted these comments and pointed out that it was the intention to pursue any remodelling/reorganisation/restructuring in partnership and not the intention to exclude trade unions at any stage. He reiterated the importance of all Directorates working in partnership and collaboration with the Trade Unions representatives.

10. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS/COLLABORATIVE WORKING

The Chief Executive referred to ongoing discussions of the ten South East Wales authorities to assess potential areas for collaboration and determine which areas of activity should form part of the bid for funding to the Welsh Assembly Government.

He indicated that each local authority had been asked to identify two long term and two short term potential areas for collaborative working and that the county borough had suggested for the short term - education advisory service and child care placement commissioning, and for the long term - strategic procurement/purchasing and staff training/recruitment/retention. The Leadership Group (Chief Executives and Leaders) had then considered each submission and agreed to recommend to the Connecting South East Wales Board that regional commissioning/out-of-county placements, back office functions and legacy agreements be pursued. Details of the outcome are awaited.

The Trade Union representative requested they be advised of the areas of collaboration that are subsequently incorporated within any bids submitted. Mrs. Baldwin made reference to the recommendations within the document produced by the Joint Council for Wales as a result of the Task and Finish Group which had considered staffing implications in the light of collaborative working and indicated that she would make a copy available for information.

Mr. Davies then made reference to the visit to be made by Sir Jeremy Beecham on 3rd February 2006 (as part of his review of local government) and indicated that arrangements have been made for him to meet with Standing Executive Conference representatives and then travel to New Tredegar to meet representatives of the local partnership.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no issues raised at this point on the agenda.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 18TH APRIL 2006

It was noted that the quarterly meetings for 2006 have been scheduled for 18th April, 11th July and 24th October 2006. Special meetings would be convened as and when required.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2006 they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN