



## JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, DUFFRYN HOUSE, DUFFRYN  
BUSINESS PARK ON TUESDAY 23RD JANUARY 2007 AT 2.00 PM

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PRESENT:

Councillor G.R. Price - Vice-Chairman - Presiding

Councillors:

H.A. Andrews, D.T. Davies, E.K. Griffiths, G. Jones, D.V. Poole, Mrs. B.M. Toomer

Together with:

S. Rosser (Chief Executive), D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), A. Williams (Assistant Director - Resourcing and Performance), 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), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

**Trade Union Representatives:**

B. Barrowman (GMB), Mrs. P. Baldwin (UNISON), M.J. Payne (GMB), C. Vickers (NAS/UWT) and Ms. A. Stevens (ASCL).

### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.T. Hardacre and R. Woodyatt, R. Webb (Director of the Environment), E. Gibbs (UNISON) and J.T. Toner (TGWU).

#### 1. COUNCILLOR MRS. B.M. TOOMER - CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Chairman introduced Councillor Mrs. B.M. Toomer who has taken up the position of Cabinet Member for Performance Management and was attending her first meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee.

#### 2. ADRIAN WILLIAMS - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - RESOURCING AND PERFORMANCE

The Members welcomed Adrian Williams to his first meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee since his appointment as Assistant Director - Resourcing and Performance.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**4. MINUTES - 24TH OCTOBER 2006**

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 24th October 2006 (minute nos. 1 - 15 on page nos. 1 - 5).

**MATTERS ARISING**

**5. Christmas Closedown Arrangements (minute no. 8)**

It was clarified that the proposals for the Christmas/New Year had been approved by both the Human Resources Strategy Group and Corporate Management Team and not by Cabinet as has been implied.

In recognising that the details had been reported at the meeting, Mrs. Baldwin pointed out that at no stage had there been any consultation with the Trade Union.

**6. Local Government Pension Scheme - Retirement Policy (minute no. 12)**

Mr. Payne referred to the issues that had been raised by Mr. Bezzina requesting that as the Discretionary Compensation Regulations have not yet been agreed by the Government and their fundamental legal basis is being challenged by UNISON, any scheme should be put on hold until the final regulations are actually published.

Mr. Hardacre indicated that he was aware of the challenge and, in noting the guidance issued by the Department of Work and Pensions in relation to age related benefits indicated that he would take this information into account as appropriate.

**MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES**

**7. Minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee**

The minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 15th October 2006 were received and noted.

**8. BUDGET 2007/2008**

Mr. Rosser referred to the report presented to Cabinet in December and indicated that there have been minor changes since the preparation of the original report. He highlighted the key elements of the Provisional Local Government Settlement announced by the Welsh Assembly Government and referred to the ongoing detailed budget consideration process for 2007/8.

It was noted that the provisional settlement sets out the Welsh Assembly Governments intentions and initial projections indicated another difficult settlement.

The settlement increase of 4.5% included a number of new burdens so the underlying increase (to support existing services) was of the order of 3.5%. However, this incorporated provision for the final installment for the anticipated increased costs of job evaluation so the real inflationary provision for pay and price increases was of the order of 2 - 2.5%. Given the evident budget pressures (and continuing requirement to find a 1% efficiency saving) it looked likely that the budget will be very tight with little, if any, room for service development.

Mr. Rosser indicated that alongside budgetary issues continues to run the efficiency agenda and confirmed that all Heads of Service have been requested to take part in the exercise and to challenge existing service delivery arrangements in order to identify efficiencies which make the most of available resources and contribute to the budget setting process.

He referred to the pressures within the various services and their budgetary requirements and to specific sums within the settlement which are hypothecated for different areas of activity. He pointed out that with regards to efficiency savings, the Minister has indicated that only a maximum of 0.3% can be passported to schools with the Council having to find the remaining 0.7%.

The issue of how the job evaluation exercise and back payments would be funded was raised and the Mr. Rosser confirmed that provision will be made in the budget for job evaluation and detailed the monies already set aside for this purpose.

The Unions made reference to discussions between themselves, Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association regarding the potential of national protection for dealing with equal pay claims and as to whether some of the costs could be capitalised or all would fall on the budget set aside for job evaluation. Mr. Rosser explained the difference between the capital and revenue budgets and noted that discussions in relation to equal pay claims and back pay issues are ongoing

## **9. JOB EVALUATION**

Mr. G. Hardacre referred to the meeting of the Joint Steering Group on 14th December 2006 and to the progress made on a number of issues raised at that time.

He then gave a verbal update in relation to job evaluation and confirmed that the vast majority of evaluations have now been completed. He noted that the Analysts continue with the evaluation and that the Evaluation Panels are undertaking a sore thumbing exercise and are making good progress. He anticipated that this process would be completed by the end of February and confirmed that issues in relation to the modeling structure would be progressed at that stage. In noting that discussions are ongoing, reference was made to literature which had been circulated to staff within catering cleaning by GMB and, in noting the joint working protocol between the council and respective Trade Unions, concerns were raised on the release of the information. Mr. Payne indicated that claims had been logged and not dealt with and it had been concluded on a Regional basis that all necessary information should be made available to the respective Members. He highlighted the outcome of the Allen Case and Bainbridge Case and confirmed that the documentation has been issued to protect individual members and provide them with an opportunity to register and had not been intended to undermine ongoing discussions. He confirmed that all claims would be held in abeyance and dealt with as part of collective discussions. However, if no collective agreement can be reached, applications would be submitted to tribunal accordingly.

Mr. Hardacre indicated that he was aware of changing case law and would be happy to liaise with Mr. Payne on such issues. The reason for advising staff was noted but it was accepted that in future, in order to adhere to the joint working protocol, the county borough should be informed of any such action to be taken.

Mr. Payne accepted this point and confirmed that the information was released on the legal advice given at the time and reiterated the commitment of the GMB to work in partnership with the county borough.

**10. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT**

There were no issues raised under this item that had not been dealt with elsewhere during the course of the meeting.

**11. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS - SOUTH EAST WALES SHARED SERVICES PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

Details of the progress report prepared by Jo Farrar which highlighted recent achievements, key risks and issues, the resource position and current activities were noted. Mr. Barnett detailed the recent achievements as outlined therein and highlighted the key issues and risks. Specific reference was made to the commission of the Project Team and the three phases of reporting (feasibility, business case and feasibility framework) were outlined.

It was noted that the first draft of the joint Project Initiation Document for phase 1 of the project had been approved by the Steering Group in December and that PriceWaterhouseCooper are examining the data gathering templates which had been circulated for each of the functional areas and are to give an analysis of the information gleaned from the data sets. It will then be for the Board to determine how best to use the information provided. The next phase would be to select certain areas of activity in order to carry out more detailed investigations (Strategic Outline Case) and the final phase would involve detailed discussions with individual authorities.

He confirmed that at the end of the feasibility study the participating authorities will 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. In advance of any such decision, extensive consultation with Trade Unions would be required.

Mrs. Baldwin referred to a Seminar she had recently attended and to issues that had been raised in relation to making the connection, shared services and managing change and in view of the human resource implications emphasised the need to ensure that Unions are kept up to date at each stage.

Mr. Barnett indicated that once stage 2 has been agreed there would be a requirement for detailed discussions with individual authorities and that consultation would be undertaken at that time. It was confirmed that at the moment there are no specific proposals which require engagement but that the Unions would be informed when the results have been received.

Mrs. Baldwin referred to the document prepared by JCW in relation to staffing issues and indicated that she would forward a copy to Mr. Hardacre for information.

**12. WALES 2006/2007 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF SURVEY**

Mr. Hardacre referred concerns raised by the Trade Unions in relation to the staff survey and reported that it has now been signed off and it has been agreed that there will be participation in each of the eight areas identified.

Following a query from Mrs. Baldwin, he confirmed that the completed surveys (60 from each Directorate) would be returned to the Union for the information to be collated and analysed.

**13. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

Mr. Rosser detailed progress on the development of the new building and referred to ongoing discussions with staff in the relevant areas. It was noted that there will 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. Baldwin made reference to the requirement for relocation packages and indicated that she had sought a meeting with Mr. Hardacre to progress the matter. Mrs. Baldwin indicated that the general relocation package has been in existence since 1997 and there is a need to renegotiate its terms and conditions and pointed out that certain harmonisation issues also remain to be resolved. In agreeing with the need for such a package, Mr. Payne indicated that it is also necessary to look at the 'Management of Change' document.

In acknowledging that there will be change, Mr. Rosser indicated that there is a requirement to agree a set of principles and Mr. Hardacre indicated that he would examine the documents with a view to undertaking a review as appropriate.

**14. TIMETABLE FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

In noting that the meeting of the Chief Executive Directorate Joint Consultative Committee has been scheduled for 23rd March 2007, it was agreed that a timetable identifying the dates of all Directorate Joint Consultative Committees be collated and circulated to members of the Committee for information.

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items raised under this item

**16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that dates for future meetings have been scheduled for 17th April, 10th July and 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 17th April 2007 they were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.