



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, DUFFRYN HOUSE, DUFFRYN BUSINESS PARK ON TUESDAY, 17TH APRIL 2007 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

Together with:

S. Rosser (Chief Executive), A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment), A. Williams (Assistant Director of Resourcing and Performance), B. Hopkins (Head of Planning and Strategy), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development), J. Powell (Personnel Manager - Employee Services), K. Evans (Personnel Manager - Policy and Performance), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives

B. Barrowman (GMB), Mrs. P. Baldwin (UNISON), D. Bezzina (Unison Regional Organiser), M.J. Payne (GMB), Ms. J. Shelton (UNISON), P. Jones (AMICUS), J. Poole (UCATT), C. Vickers (NAS/UWT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Miss. G. Jenkins (ACAC) and L. Woodland (Unison Assistant Branch Secretary).

1. ANTHONY O'SULLIVAN – DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The Members welcomed Anthony O'Sullivan to his first meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee since his appointment as Director of the Environment.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES - 23RD JANUARY 2007

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 23rd January 2007 (minute nos. 1 - 16 on page nos. 1 – 5).

MATTERS ARISING

4. Making The Connections - South East Wales Shared Services Project Progress Report (minute no. 11)

Mrs. Baldwin gave members a copy of the Welsh Assembly Government paper entitled 'Partnership and Managing Change – A Partnership Agreement for Public Services in Wales', signed by the Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM and Sue Essex AM.

Mr. Bezzina confirmed the need for this subject to be a standard agenda item at future meetings. This was agreed. A request was also made for a working group to be established but Mr. Barnett confirmed at this moment in time there was little for group to discuss. However he informed the committee, he was producing a detailed report for Cabinet, that contained confirmation of Phase 1's completion and working together with the South East Wales Board, Phase 2 was to commence. This would include service areas such as human resources, training and payroll etc. A sub-group of 10 people would be asked to look at the internal audit and procurement. The report would go to Cabinet within the next few weeks.

Mr. Rosser confirmed the need for a communications strategy and suggested that a paper be presented to the committee at the next meeting. In addition, the committee would also discuss the sub-group at the next meeting. Mr. Barnett asked members to remember that the project was still at its fact finding stage and continuing to carry out a feasibility study.

5. Wales 2006/2007 Local Government Staff Survey (minute no. 12)

Mrs. Baldwin reiterated her request for information. She was informed one query had been received and this would be sent to her.

MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

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

The minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 16th January and 14th February 2007 were received and noted.

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

The minutes of the meeting of the Directorate of the Environment Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 7th February and 27th March 2007 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM 27TH MARCH 2007

8. Bonus Review Update (minute no. 5)

Trade Union members requested an update and confirmed the need for staff to be kept informed.

9. Minutes of the Chief Executive's Joint Consultative Committee

The minutes of the Chief Executive's Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 4th April 2007 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING FROM 4TH APRIL 2007

10. Managing Change (minute no. 5)

Following a request for information, Mr. Rosser highlighted the differences between managing change and shared services to members. Mr. Barnett confirmed there had been many changes under 'managing change' and that future discussions would be needed to establish the best way forward.

11. DATES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

The members noted the scheduled dates of the Directorate Joint Consultative Committees for the remainder of 2007.

Mr. Hardacre made members aware that the dates detailed for the Chief Executive Directorate were subject to change, but that this may only be a simple adjustment from the afternoon to the morning, on the dates given.

12. CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN 2007

Mr. Barnett introduced the report prior to it going before Cabinet. He informed members of the proposal to closedown the office on Monday 24th December, and the need for employees to take an additional half-day's leave, flexi leave or time off in lieu to cover this. The afternoon closure would be at the discretion of the council and if approved, a credit was to be given for this, as in previous years. To help facilitate the extra half days leave, it was proposed to allow employees to carry in excess of thirty-seven hours over to the next flexi time period (due to start on 22-12-07). A discussion ensued, in which it was acknowledged that consideration had to be given to staff that were not office based and unable to take time off. The need for flexibility in these cases was acknowledged.

Mr. Payne asked that the final decision be communicated to staff as early as possible as leave commitments were already being decided. Mr. Payne also asked that consideration be given in allowing staff to mortgage a half day's leave from the 2008 Leave Year allocation which commences on 1 January. It was agreed that further consideration be given to this matter. Mrs. Baldwin confirmed the need to consult with union members.

13. JOB EVALUATION UPDATE

Mr. Hardacre gave a verbal update in relation to job evaluation and confirmed that the Directors and more recently, the Heads of Service had now had the opportunity to view the rank order of jobs. The Directors had seen the results only for their own Directorate and the Heads of Service had only seen the results for their own Service Areas. The Heads of Service had been asked to look at the rank order of posts and highlight any anomalies.

Work was now due to commence on pay modelling and Mr. Hardacre also referred to the intention to prepare a Joint Bulletin with the Trade Unions to update staff on the current position and future time-lines.

Mr. Bezzina agreed for the need to update employees via a Joint Bulletin and asked that nothing be issued until the Job Evaluation Group had had the opportunity to review the statement and sign it off.

In addition, a brief discussion took place in relation to the issue of 'back pay'. Mr. Payne referred to his comments at the last meeting regarding potential claims and informed the Committee that due to statutory requirements for a person to log any grievances within six months of leaving Caerphilly County Borough Council, he had recently had to submit a number of claims. However, he understood that all internal procedures had not been exhausted and that further discussions would need to take place in order to resolve the issues.

14. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Mrs. Baldwin expressed concern over the number of suspensions recorded and questioned whether the authority had dealt with these in line with the authority's agreed policy. Mr. Rosser confirmed individual cases could not be considered, but that the policy would be reviewed at the next meeting and if necessary revisions would be made.

Mr. Vickers welcomed the introduction of the standard agenda item, but raised various concerns about consultations, in particular the lack of union consultees and time given to respond. He asked for better time management to enable more effective responses to be collated, and claimed at present consultation responses were rushed due to time constraints.

Mr. Rosser acknowledged the comments made and suggested that in future, advance warning of issues to be raised be given, to ensure they were dealt with at the appropriate committee and to allow that committee to concentrate and dedicate time to those items. Mr. Hardacre was asked to look at possible 'agenda co-ordination' of future meetings.

15. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Mr. Rosser detailed progress on the development of the new building and referred to contractual discussions as to the completion date. In addition, members were informed the furniture for the offices was to be ordered shortly. It was noted that work at Ystrad Fawr would commence early (in September 2006), and all work carried out would recognise that the offices were still in use and Health and Safety for all would be paramount.

Mr. Barnett informed the committee of additional staff focus groups being implemented on a 'floor by floor' basis to enable the induction of staff and to illustrate the available facilities in a particular working area. Mrs. Baldwin made references to the lack of Trade Union involvement with previous focus groups and asked that this be revised. Mr. Hardacre confirmed that all information received from the Trade Unions had been fed into the Focus Groups, but her comments would be taken on board.

Mrs. Baldwin asked that a sub-group be set up to look at possible relocation packages. Mr. Hardacre confirmed the authority already had a policy and that as such, other concerns took a higher priority. However, following further representation by Mr. Bezzina, Mr. Rosser suggested an initial meeting take place to discuss any key issues the Trade Unions may have with the existing policy and if possible, Mr. Hardacre would revise the policy.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16. Voluntary Early Retirement

Mrs. Baldwin raised the subject of rumours that staff were being offered voluntary early retirement (VER) and she sought clarification of the criteria in which this was being offered. Mr. Rosser stated VER was not being offered to all staff, but confirmed that following the budget restrictions in 2007/08 and the resulting directorate restructuring programme(s), all options were being considered and VER was one tool that could be used.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10TH JULY 2007

It was noted that the quarterly meetings for the remainder of the year had been scheduled for 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 10th July 2007 they were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 2.45 p.m.