



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 22ND JULY 2008 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Miss L. Ackerman, P.J. Bevan, R.W. Gough, C.P. Mann, J.A. Pritchard, L.G. Whittle

Together with:

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

Trade Union Representatives

S. Brassinne (UCATT), B. May (TGWU), P. Jones (AMICUS), J. Shelton (Joint Union), L. Woodland (UNISON)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. Davies and C. Hobbs, D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure) and S. Howells (Acting Assistant Director of Resourcing and Performance), B. Barrowman (GMB), N. Blundell (UCATT), E. Gibbs (UNISON), M.J. Payne (GMB) and J. Poole (UCATT)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Mr. Edgar Gibbs (UNISON) was appointed Chairman of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee for the ensuing year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor A.J. Pritchard was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee for the ensuing year.

In the absence of the nominated Chairman, Councillor A.J. Pritchard took the Chair for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES - 29TH JANUARY 2008

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 29th January 2008 (minute nos. 1 - 17 on page nos. 1 - 4).

MATTERS ARISING

5. Excess Travel Scheme (minute no. 10)

Mrs. K. Evans (Personnel Manager - Policy and Performance) advised the final draft of the document was to go to Trade Unions tomorrow morning.

6. Staff in the Redeployment Pool (minute no. 15)

Mrs. K. Evans advised that there were less than half a dozen members of staff in the corporate/directorate redeployment pool and the necessary parties had been informed. Due to the numbers involved, no report was required.

MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

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 held on 18th January 2008 were received and noted.

Matter Arising

8. Date of Next Meeting (minute no. 9)

It was noted the Directorate meeting of 17th April 2008 did not take place. The last meeting was held on 14th July 2008.

9. MINUTES OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 23rd January, 16th April and 18th June 2008 were received and noted.

Matter Arising

10. Any Other Business (minute no. 7)

It was noted at the meeting held on 16th April 2008, under Any Other Business, there were a number of errors to be corrected as follows:

- (i) Second paragraph, "AH said he does want undue delay..." This should read "AH said he does not want undue delay..." ; and
- (ii) Fourth paragraph, "... as timeless as possible." It was agreed timeless was an inappropriate word and should be replaced with "quickly".

It was noted at the meeting held on 18th June 2008, M.J. Payne (GMB) was in attendance and M. Portlock (UNISON) was absent.

11. MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION AND LEISURE DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 20th February and 11th June 2008 were received and noted.

Matters Arising

12. Domestic Violence Policy (minute no. 8)

The existence of two separate policies (Domestic Violence and Violence at Work) was clarified, as referred to in paragraph 8 of the meeting held on 20th February 2008.

13. MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Chief Executives Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 11th March and 10th June 2008 were received and noted.

14. DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES - STRUCTURE AND MECHANISM

Mr. N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services) advised members this item had been placed on the agenda due to concerns that the mechanisms for discussions/feedback were not working as well as parties would have liked. Mr. Barnett reaffirmed the structure and position of the Joint Consultative meetings and advised it was each member's responsibility to ensure there was representation at the meeting(s) and to encourage discussions to take place.

15. JOB EVALUATION

Mr. Barnett gave a verbal update in relation to job evaluation and noted that the Trade Union representatives are actively involved in the negotiations regarding the new pay structure. It was anticipated that a conclusion to the discussions was imminent, with a meeting due to take place the following day.

A formal report updating Members would be tabled by the end of August.

16. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Mr. G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development) reported that this was a standard agenda item following concerns 18 months ago over the lack of consultation between Unison and management. All parties present agreed this had improved immensely but reiterated the requirement to work together and ensure that consultation is undertaken at the earliest possible stage in order that issues can be resolved more quickly.

17. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS/SHARED SERVICES

Mr. S. Rosser (Chief Executive) gave a brief background to the project and advised following recent elections across South Wales, the group had not been as active as normal. However, there was a joint meeting to be held on 24th July 2008 and there may be items to report following this.

In addition, Mr. Rosser advised that at a recent meeting of the Local Service Board there had been a discussion regarding the wish of trade unions to become more involved in the work of the Board. He would report further on this at the next meeting.

Mr. Barnett summarised action taken to consider sharing HR, payroll and training. He confirmed the first draft of the document would be received by the end of August. This would be referred to the Steering Group to review in September and all ten local authorities will respond to the draft during October. This was considered to be a tight consultation period.

Mr. Barnett also asked Members to note that Trade Unions were meeting today to receive an update and to consult on the plans.

18. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Mr. Rosser advised this was a standard agenda item whilst Penallta House was under construction. It could now be removed from the agenda following the office's completion and occupation. It was noted there were other avenues (such as via the Staff Ambassador Group) where any outstanding issues could be addressed.

It was recognised there were individual issues on each floor and if necessary these would be fed into CMT or Cabinet.

Members asked if there were any empty office spaces following the creation of Penallta House. Officers confirmed there were none and noted there was always an intention to review accommodation at other locations, following the completion of Penallta House. Property Services would bring a report forward to the appropriate committee in due course.

19. HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER (WALES HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD)

Mr. A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment) advised the authority was trying to retain housing stock and therefore requested the agenda title be amended to "Wales Housing Quality Standard" (WHQS).

He advised Members a review was ongoing to establish the number of properties needing an upgrade to meet the standard, the cost of each upgrade and the costs of any outside contractors used. The steer of the review was to assess, cost and compare. A business plan would be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government in September 2008, in the interim (until September), dispensation had been given to the authority.

The Leader, Councillor L.G. Whittle, informed Members that Plaid's stance was very clear. They were opposed to stock transfers. Whilst they were aware improvements were needed, this should be accomplished by joint working with tenants and Officers. He advised he had recently visited Glasgow, Scotland and had been shown the good standards of housing that could be achieved, even in the most deprived areas.

Officers acknowledged the Leaders intent and reiterated the need to review the figures concerns, together with outside forces, such as the current economy climate. A report would be brought before the group at the next meeting (21st October 2008).

20. BASIC SKILLS AND TRADE UNION LEARNING REP RECRUITMENT

Mr. Hardacre referred to the basic skills agenda across Wales and highlighted the authority's commitment to this. To achieve success, he raised the need for Trade Union assistance.

Reports would be submitted to the Human Resources Strategy Group.

21. INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND FUTURE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr. Rosser confirmed the management's position regarding industrial action and reported that, schools aside, as many offices as possible had opened during the recent 2-day strike. Numbers of picketers across the sites varied, as did the number of staff willing to cross the lines. The authority widely advertised that offices would be closed to the public and now they were trying to get back to normal.

It was noted there had been a number of minor issues highlighted during the action, and these would be referred to the appropriate body.

There was acknowledgement of the union's position and the possible threat of a further 3-day strike in September. Officers advised should this proceed, the authority's strategy may be reviewed.

Union Members raised concerns about the short notice and lack of clarity of information given out to their members, such as the exemptions list and location of pickets. Officers confirmed this would be reviewed in readiness for any future action and confirmed lessons had been learnt.

Mr. Rosser asked when an announcement would be made to confirm the second round of industrial action, but Union Members advised they had not received this information as yet. Members asked that any information received be circulated to JCC Members.

Members raised concerns over the limited information available to members of the public and somewhat confusing press notices, in particular in regard to refuse collection. Mr Rosser advised GMB had not crossed the picket lines and this had a greater than anticipated effect on refuse collection. There was not an opportunity to address the problem until staff had returned to work the following Friday.

22. HOME CARE

Mr. Barnett confirmed he and Mr. D. Hopkins (Director of Education and Leisure) had heard and dealt with the matter. It had now been referred back to the Trade Union.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. Trade Union Representatives

Members commented on the limited number of Trade Union representatives present at the meeting. Union representatives confirmed there was a number absent due to illness. It was confirmed the group had been well attended previously, and there had been a request to postpone the meeting due to the known lack of Trade Union representation on this occasion.

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 21ST OCTOBER 2008

It was noted that the next meeting has been scheduled for 21st October 2008. 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 21st October 2008 they were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.