



CORPORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON 20TH OCTOBER 2009 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor A.J. Pritchard - Chairman

Councillors:

Miss. L. Ackerman, P.J. Bevan, R. Davies, R.W. Gough, C. Hobbs, C.P. Mann, J.A. Pritchard

Together with:

S. Rosser (Chief Executive), N. Barnett (Director of Corporate Services), A. O'Sullivan (Director of the Environment), A. Heaney (Director of Social Services), S. Aspinall (Director of Education and Leisure), K. Evans (Personnel Manager - Policy and Performance), H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

Trade Union Representatives

J. Poole (UCATT), G. Enright (UNISON), J. Shelton (Joint Union)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L.G. Whittle, A. Woodland (Unison Regional Organiser), E. Gibbs (UNISON), N. Blundell (UCATT), S. Brassinne (UCATT), B. Barrowman (GMB), N. Funnell (GMB), M.J. Payne (GMB), J. Toner (UNITE), P. Jones (UNITE), Mrs. J. Havard (NUT), B. May (TGWU), L. Horrocks (NASUWT) and G. Hardacre (Head of People Management and Development)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Andrew Morton (Unison) was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee for the ensuing year.

3. MINUTES - 8TH SEPTEMBER 2009

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 8th September 2009 (minute nos. 1 - 14 on page nos. 1 - 4).

MINUTES OF DIRECTORATE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

4. Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee - 8th July 2009

The minutes of the Education and Leisure Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 8th July 2009 were received and noted.

5. Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee - 15th July and 2nd October 2009

Subject to it being noted that Mike Portlock, Unison, although being noted as both present and absent was actually present at the first meeting and to a correction to read Gary Enright in the minutes of the second meeting, the minutes of the Social Services Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meetings held on 15th July and 2nd October 2009 were received and noted.

6. Chief Executives Directorate Joint Consultative Committee - 9th September 2009

The minutes of the Chief Executives Directorate Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 9th September 2009 were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

7. Budget Advisory Group (minute no. 5(c))

It was confirmed that there are 4 Plaid Members and 2 Independent members who sit on the Budget Advisory Group. Labour had been invited to nominate representatives but had declined.

8. Consultation (minute no. 6)

It was clarified that the '3 days' specified relates to three clear days as detailed within the agreed protocol.

9. JOB EVALUATION - SINGLE STATUS/EQUAL PAY

Mr. Barnett confirmed that as a consequence of the introduction of a new pay and grading structure (single status) and equal pay back pay negotiations, GMB and Unison have held a series of meetings to brief their Members.

In accordance with the agreed timeline, letters have been sent to the relevant staff and arrangements are in hand for them to attend sessions (which will be undertaken over a five week period) when they will be invited to consider their single status offer and accept or otherwise by signing the COT3 terms. He detailed the process which will be followed during the session (both for those who are represented or unrepresented) and confirmed that the

Appeals Panel will content to sit until such time that the process has concluded.

Mr. Barnett reported that the Employee Helpline is receiving calls from staff who are concerned that their acceptance of a single status settlement offer will rule out any appeal and/or re-evaluation that they have submitted. He confirmed that employees who sign a settlement agreement are agreeing that they will not pursue a formal claim against the Council for any existing back pay or potential secondary claims in return for a settlement payment. This should not be confused with the internal Appeal or Re-evaluation procedures.

It was noted that the job evaluation/single status helpline had experience a high level of calls over the first few days with staff wishing to make an appointment and an assurance had been sent to all staff confirming that there are sufficient places allocated to enable all to be accommodated.

10. CONSULTATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS AND MANAGEMENT

It was noted that this was a standard agenda item following concerns previously raised over the lack of consultation between Unison and management. All parties present agreed this had improved 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.

It was accepted that issues are now focussed through the individual directorate joint consultative committees and as such can be dealt with more quickly and in a more meaningful way.

Specific reference was made to the significant consultation over the last few weeks on a number of key policies that are being revisited (disciplinary, grievance, sickness absence, discretionary compensation scheme and people strategy) and it was noted that formal feedback on the proposals contained therein would be received by 11th November 2009.

Trade Union representatives had also been invited to a meeting of the Budget Advisory Group to discuss future proposals and strategies. Financial proposals raised as part of these budget strategy discussions will be presented to Members for consideration later in the year.

11. MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Mr. Rosser referred to his attendance at a recent meeting of the Connecting South East Wales Board and highlighted the key issues discussed at that time. He confirmed that the main debate had been on the settlement, regional planning in South East Wales, 21st century schools, Regional Business Process - Re-Engineering and collaborative working generally.

12. WAG PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

Mr. Barnett highlighted the key elements of the provisional local government settlement announced by the Welsh Assembly Government and confirmed that an early analysis of the settlement figure gives an additional 2.3%. However, whilst the settlement is better than expected it is still necessary to bring forward robust efficiency measures and continue to consider and debate both a medium and long-term strategy. He highlighted the severe financial constraints and the significant challenge required in achieving required savings and efficiencies and it was noted that the recession is already having an impact on local government finances as income levels continue to reduce whilst demand for many services continues. It is predicted that this situation will become worse in the coming years.

Those present noted the financial difficulties facing the Council over the next five years and accepted that the size and scale of this challenge will require a significant change in strategy to ensure statutory services to the public can be protected and as such the Council will have to consider a range of strategies in order to achieve this.

The figures were provisional at present and subject to the usual caveats and further detail on specific grants. The final budget announcement from the Welsh Assembly Government was expected on 8th December 2009 with a full report to Council in February 2010. In the meantime a comprehensive consultation programme would take place with Members to enable them to engage in the process at an early stage, the Trade Unions on the implications for staff and with the View Point Panel to seek views on priority service areas where it is thought spending should be increased and areas where it could be reduced. Views expressed as part of this consultation process will inform the report to be presented to Council.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13. Bereavement John Wakley, Former Head of Personnel

The Chairman made reference to the recent death of John Wakley following a long period of illness. Members and Officers stood in silence as a mark of respect and extended their condolences to the bereaved family.

14. Edgar Gibbs, Unison Representative

It was noted that Edgar Gibbs was soon to retire and those present wished to place on record their appreciation to the way that he had performed his role both as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee during his term of office. He was wished every success and happiness for the future.

15. Leigh Woodland, Unison Representative

It was noted that Leigh had now returned to work following a period of illness and was welcomed back into her role.

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the quarterly meetings for 2010 had been scheduled for 26th January, 27th April, 27th July and 19th October 2010. 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 26th January 2010 they were signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.