

UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Wednesday 7th March, 2012 at 1100 hours.

PRESENT:-

A. Lowery (Unison) – Chair

Council Representatives:-

Councillors R.J. Bowler, Mrs. P.M. Bowmer, J.A. Clifton, J.E. Hall, D. McGregor, K.F. Walker and G.O. Webster.

Unison Representatives:-

G. Buxton, R. Frisby, C. Hirst and J. Woods.

Also in attendance at the meeting was Roger Young, Regional Organiser, Unison.

Unite Representatives:-

I. Barber, S. Sambrooks and T. Walker

Officers:-

S.E.A. Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), L. Keeling (Head of Human Resources & Payroll) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

953. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B.R. Murray-Carr, A.M. Syrett, A.F. Tomlinson, E. Watts, W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer) and R. Farnsworth (Unison).

954. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

The Chair advised the meeting that he wished to introduce and welcome Roger Young from Unison Regional Office who had replaced Andy Freeman as Regional Organiser.

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The Head of Human Resources & Payroll welcomed Roger to the meeting and advised him that the Chief Executive Officer would be in contact with him shortly to arrange a mutual time and date for them to meet.

955. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

956. MINUTES – 10TH AUGUST 2011

Minute Number 309 – Draft Trade Union Facilities Agreement 2011

The Chair raised concern that to date no progress had been made toward the Unions having their own, and, direct access to a web page on the Council's intranet site. The Solicitor to the Council replied that this would be subject to the Council complying with the Local Government Publicity Code as there were restrictions. The Solicitor to the Council would liaise with the Communications Officer and advise the Unions of progress with regard to this.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee held on 10th August 2011 be approved as a correct record.

(Solicitor to the Council)

957. MINUTES – 30TH NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the inquorate meeting held on 30th November 2011 were noted.

958. MINUTES – 8TH FEBRUARY 2012

The Chair stated that the Unions would like it to be clear that they had declined to attend the special meeting of the UECC on 8th February 2012 not because of any items on the agenda for that meeting but because of other issues that the Unions were in negotiation with and also because of a request that had been made to the Authority. The Unions had felt that the special meeting had been unnecessary and bearing in mind the timescales in relation to this meeting, was not warranted and was inflammatory. These concerns had been made known to the Leader and the Chief Executive Officer. Further, at the Chief Executive Officer's briefings, he had been informed that language had been used to infer that the item on the budget savings proposals had been passed at Council on 15th February 2012 because the Unions had not attended the special meeting on 8th February. The Unions had made

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it clear that the special meeting would not be recognised by the Unions and the item could have been deferred to this meeting for discussion, however, Union members are being led to believe that the item had been agreed because of the Unions non attendance at the special meeting.

It was moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor G.O. Webster that the minutes of a special meeting held on 8th February 2012 be approved.

Upon being put to the vote all of the Employers side were in favour of the motion and all of the Union side were against the motion.

959. PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report which gave details of the Public Sector Apprenticeship Programme up to February 2012.

16 -18 year old NEET's

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll advised the meeting that 13 apprentices had now achieved their apprenticeship framework and not 12 as stated in the report. This was because the apprentice who had originally refused help had now completed the framework.

18 plus age group

Sixty one apprentices had been recruited since January 2010, (this was one over profile), with 17 remaining on programme. Thirty Seven had achieved their apprenticeship framework and the Head of Human Resources and Payroll advised the meeting that additional training had also being provided to these 37 apprentices.

All Apprentices

Fifty Four apprentices had now left and 22 remained on programme. The reasons for those who had left the programme were provided in the report.

A full update would be provided to Members at the end of June 2012 when phase 1 of the programme closes, along with an update on the survey being carried out with apprentices and managers.

Future Funding - Phase 2 Public Sector Apprentices

A funding bid to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust had been successful and this had enabled a further 30 apprentices to be recruited and placed with public sector placement partners (none within the Authority). An induction week for all 30 apprentices had taken place week commencing 20th February 2012.

In addition, a bid for a private sector apprenticeship scheme had been successful; these apprentices will be employed by private sector businesses that will receive grants of up to £1000k. West Nott's and Chesterfield Colleges would be carrying out the recruitment and training provision in relation to the placements.

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Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor J.A. Clifton
RESOLVED that the report be received.

958. Ct'd MINUTES – 8TH FEBRUARY 2012

The Chair stated that he wished to refer back to the special meeting on 8th February 2012. He referred to a letter he had received from the Chief Executive Officer dated 9th February 2012, which informed the Unions that both the Budget Savings Proposals report and the Senior Pay Policy statement had both been on the 8th February UECC agenda for information only and not for consultation. The Chair stated a subsequent letter had been sent to employees who were affected by this and were due to TUPE transfer on the 1st March 2012, providing them with details of the decision taken by Council on the 15th February 2012, and also stating that the Employers are still open to further consultation on the issue. The Unions requested clarification on where the Employers are in terms of consultation.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll replied that the report to the 8th February Council meeting had been for information only as it set out the extensive consultation that had taken place and the failure to reach any agreement through the Regional Joint Secretaries at the meeting in October 2011. The letter had also set out an opportunity for the Unions to come back again by the 30th November 2011 but nothing was received by the Employers and nothing to say that it had been closed down. The reason the report was for information only was to inform the Unions that the report was going to the 15th February Council as the Employers felt that consultation had been exhausted. The letter further stated that the Employers were open to further consultation because if the Union were open to reaching a collective agreement on the proposals, the Employers were still open to discussion.

The Regional Organiser, Unison, raised concern regarding the Employers decision to issue an HR1 giving notice of potential redundancies. To resolve this matter the Unions would be open to further dialogue to find a solution. The particular concern was the impact on the staff who were transferring to Shirebrook Town Council and the staff who were transferring to North East Derbyshire District Council, the decision to change their entitlement to lump sum car allowance or essential car user allowance prior to transfer and the Unions would ask that that be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll replied that she would like to clarify the point that was being made and had tried to clarify with some staff involved but had not received a response. It was a statutory requirement to issue the HR1. With regard to changing their terms and conditions, the letter sent was clear that the Employers did not intend to change their conditions prior to 1st April 2013, which is in line with the remainder of the workforce. The HR1 had to be issued prior to transfer because the decision had been taken by Members on the 15th February and employees needed to be notified of this decision and its impact. The decision was not made in connection with the transfer but it was necessary to notify the employees of that.

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The Regional Organiser, Unison, replied that this had covered his concern he had that the HR1 notice to the employees concerned that there was no intention to make them redundant; this is just about the car user allowance – I hope it is still possible to resolve the issue prior to the 1st April.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll replied that it would be necessary to arrange an appropriate meeting with the Chief Executive Officer to discuss these issues.

960. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS APRIL TO JUNE 2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in respect of sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period April to June 2011.

The sickness absence target for April to June 2011 was 2 days per full time employee with the outturn being 1.63 days compared to 1.64 days for the same period during 2010. A breakdown of these figures was as follows;

	<u>Long Term</u>	<u>Short Term</u>
Apr-June 2011	0.89 days per FTE	0.74 days per FTE
Apr-June 2010	0.93 days per FTE	0.70 days per FTE

In relation to short term sickness absence the relevant Directors/Heads of Service had been informed of any adverse trends in their departments. The outcome of occupational health referrals for this quarter was attached to the report for committee's information. A breakdown of reasons for long term sickness absence was also provided in the report.

It was noted that there were no health surveillance clinics held during this period.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that the Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics report for the period April to June be received.

961. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in respect of sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period July to September 2011.

The sickness absence target for July to September 2011 was 2 days per full time employee with the outturn being 2.39 days compared to 1.97 days for the same period during 2010. This gave an outturn for the first six months (April to Sept) of

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4.02 days per full time employee against a target of 4 days per full time employee. A breakdown of these figures was as follows;

	<u>Long Term</u>	<u>Short Term</u>
July-Sept 2011	1.53 days per FTE	0.86 days per FTE
July-Sept 2010	1.26 days per FTE	0.71 days per FTE

It was noted that there was a marked increase in the overall sickness absence figures for both long and short term sickness absence with the majority of the increase resulting from the Apprentices and Street Services sections.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll advised the meeting that concerns had been raised with both sections with the purpose of ensuring that the managing sickness absence procedure was being consistently applied.

There were four health surveillance clinics held during this quarter covering HAVS (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome), audiometry, and driver reviews for 43 employees.

The outcome of occupational health referrals for this quarter was attached to the report for committee's information. A breakdown of reasons for long term sickness absence was also provided in the report.

Moved by C. Hirst, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that the Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics report for the period July to September 2011 be received.

962. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in respect of sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period October to December 2011.

The sickness absence target for October to December 2011 was 2 days per full time employee with the outturn being 2.42 days compared to 2.02 days for the same period during 2010. The year to date outturn was 6.44 days per full time employee against a target of 6 days per full time employee. A breakdown of these figures was as follows;

	<u>Long Term</u>	<u>Short Term</u>
Oct-Dec 2011	1.36 days per FTE	1.06 days per FTE
Oct-Dec 2010	1.00 days per FTE	1.02 days per FTE

The overall sickness absence figure was higher than the figure for the same period in 2010 and worse than the target. This was due to an increase of 148.4 working days in long term sickness, and 16 days in short term sickness. The majority of the increase in long term sickness had occurred within the Contact Centre service, which also has high levels of short term sickness absence.

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There were five health surveillance clinics held during this period covering HAVS, audiometry, hepatitis B, and driver reviews for 73 employees.

A breakdown of the reasons for long term sickness absence was provided in the report and it was noted that there had been an increase in muscular/skeletal and stress related sickness absence. A report regarding this had been presented to Safety Committee on 2nd March 2012 outlining that these cases were 50/50 work and home related.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by C. Hirst.

RESOLVED that the Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics report for the period October to December 2011 be received.

963. EQUALITIES MONITORING REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring Data for the period July to September 2011 on the Council's performance on equalities issues in relation to its employment practices.

Information and analysis in relation to the recruitment and selection of apprentices for the period July to September 2010 had been circulated to committee members at their pre meeting.

Committee's attention was drawn to information relating to permanent employees in the report and was advised that 15 posts in total were advertised and 14 of the posts appointed to.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll further advised Committee that a policy had been agreed to help avoid redundancies, vacant posts were in the first instance advertised internally before going external, unless a specific professional qualification was not available in the workforce.

A number of 50 plus employees from the Street Services section had left the Authority through voluntary redundancy.

A Unison representative queried the Council's policy on unfilled vacancies. The Head of Human Resources and Payroll replied that currently the recruitment drag period was four weeks. A three month recruitment drag period had been discussed but this had not been taken up by Strategic Alliance Management Team at this time. There now has to be a business case if a vacant post is to be advertised.

Further to questions raised by the Chair, the Head of Human Resources and Payroll explained to the meeting that the Governance Management Team (GMT) had been set up following the appointment of the Joint Directors, and consisted of the Chief Executive Officer, the Head of Human Resources and Payroll, the Solicitor to the Council and the Director of Corporate Resources. The purpose of the GMT was to discuss issues around human resources, governance and finance. The Solicitor to

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the Council added that GMT meetings were officer meetings with powers of the individual officers named above.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that the Equalities Monitoring report for the period July to September 2011 be noted.

964. EQUALITIES MONITORING REPORT OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2011

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring Data for the period October to December 2011 on the Council's performance on equalities issues in relation to its employment practices.

Committee's attention was drawn to information relating to permanent employees in the report and was advised that 11 posts in total were advertised, 10 had been successful and one post unfilled.

The Head of Human Resources and Payroll sought Committee's views and consideration that in future, the Equalities Monitoring report be presented to UECC on an annual basis rather than a quarterly basis. An annual report would be more meaningful in terms of information and pie charts could be used with provision of explanatory text within the report.

The Chair replied that the Unions would discuss the proposal outside of the committee meeting and provide feed back to the next meeting of UECC. The Head of Human Resources and Payroll queried whether the January to March 2013 quarter report be suspended, with a full years report for 2011/2012, being presented at the June meeting. The Chair replied that the Union would discuss this matter and provide an answer to the Head of Human Resources and Payroll before the deadline of the UECC meeting in June. Councillor McGregor welcomed the Head of Human Resources and Payroll's suggestion for a more informative way of presenting the equalities monitoring information and also that it would save paper.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that (1) the Equalities Monitoring report for the period October to December 2011 be noted,

(2) that the Unions provide feedback to the Head of Human Resources and Payroll before the deadline of the next meeting in June 2012 in relation to the Equalities Monitoring report being presented on an annual basis at future UECC meetings.

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965. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor J.A. Clifton, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed.

966. DRAFT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 4

The Chair requested that the Draft Social Media Policy be deferred to the next meeting of UECC in June as the two Unions had not yet been able to discuss the report.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor J.A Clifton

RESOLVED that the Draft Social Media Policy be deferred until the next meeting of UECC to enable the two Unions to discuss the report.

(Head of Human Resources and Payroll/Head of Democratic Services)

967. DRAFT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 4

The Chair requested that the Draft Recruitment and Selection Policy be deferred to the next UECC meeting in June as the two Unions had not yet been able to discuss the report.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor J.A Clifton

RESOLVED that the Draft Social Media Policy be deferred until the next meeting of UECC to enable the two Unions to discuss the report.

(Head of Human Resources and Payroll/Head of Democratic Services)

The meeting concluded at 1145 hours.