

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 Thursday 7th June, 2012 at 1100 hours.

PRESENT:-

Council Representatives:-

Councillors R.J. Bowler, K. Bowman, Mrs. P.M. Bowmer, J.A. Clifton, H.J. Gilmour, D. McGregor, A.M. Syrett, A.F. Tomlinson, E. Watts and G.O. Webster.

Unison Representatives:-

R. Farnsworth, R. Frisby, C. Hirst, A. Lowery and J. Woods.

Unite Representatives:-

T. Walker.

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), S.E.A. Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), H. Mitchell (Senior Human Resources Officer) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

68. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B.R. Murray-Carr and K. Reid and A. Grundy (Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll), Union Representatives I. Barber and S. Sambrook.

69. ELECTION OF CHAIR (MEMBER'S SIDE)

Moved by Councillor K. Bowman, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that Councillor E. Watts be elected Chair of Union/Employee Consultation Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor E. Watts in the Chair

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70. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR (UNION SIDE)

Moved by R. Farnsworth, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that A. Lowery be appointed Vice Chair of Union/Employee Consultation Committee for the ensuing year.

71. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

73. TERMS OF REFERENCE

A Unison representative referred to points 3 and 4 under 'Consultation' in the Terms of Reference and requested that the ACAS definition of consultation be used instead. The ACAS definition describes that where there are issues and problems that require resolving, they are resolved jointly and resources are pooled to reach a solution. The Unison representative added that it was a more embracing definition of the word consultation.

In the absence of a copy of the ACAS definition of Consultation being circulated at the meeting, Members agreed that it be accepted, subject to their consideration outside of the meeting, and that it be submitted to the next meeting of UECC if there were any issues.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that points 3 and 4 under 'Consultation' be replaced with the ACAS definition of Consultation, subject to Members consideration outside of the meeting, and that it be submitted to the next meeting of UECC if there were any issues.

The Unison representative further stated that at paragraph 5, under 'Membership', it should be clarified that the chairmanship of the committee is rotated annually between the Employees side and Union side.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that at paragraph 5 under 'Membership', include the words "the chairmanship is rotated annually between the Employees side and the Union side".

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The Unison representative raised a query regarding the composition of membership of the Committee and that it had been previously suggested that both sides reduce their number of members.

A discussion took place.

The Solicitor to the Council advised the meeting that changing the membership of the Committee now would require referral back to Council with the proportionality of political seats looked at first.

A further discussion took place.

Members decided that membership of the Committee remains as agreed at Annual Council in May but a discussion takes place at a future date in the year to further consider reducing the membership.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by A. Lowery

RESOLVED that the membership of the Committee remains as agreed at Annual Council in May but a discussion takes place at a future date in the year to further consider reducing the membership.

(Head of Democratic Services (Annual Council))

74. MINUTES – 7TH MARCH 2012

Minute Number 956 – Union web page on the Council's Intranet

A Unison representative raised concern that it had been agreed at a previous meeting that the Unions would have their own intranet page on the Council's website but still no progress had been made on this issue. The Solicitor to the Council confirmed that she would arrange to see Unison to progress this.

Minute Number 958 – Minutes 8th February 2012 – Equalities Monitoring Report

The Chief Executive Officer referred to the end of paragraph one under minute 958 and stated that it was untrue that language had been used at his staff briefings 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.

Minute Number 964

Councillor Syrett queried if the Union had now provided feedback to the Employers side on the suggestion that the Equalities Monitoring report be presented annually at future meetings. The Unison representative replied that they had not provided feedback as they had not yet had the opportunity to speak to the new Assistant Director of Human Resources.

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

RESOLVED that subject to the Chief Executive Officer's comments being noted, the minutes of a meeting held on 7th March 2012 be approved.

75. EQUALITIES MONITORING JANUARY 2012 TO MARCH 2012

The Senior Human Resources Officer presented a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring data for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st March 2012 on the Council's performance on equality issues in relation to its employment practices.

Apprentices:

Thirteen Apprenticeship vacancies were advertised in the period with 90 applications being received. 90 candidates were shortlisted and there were 30 successful candidates. On six occasions there was more than one successful candidate per vacancy. However, in comparison for the same period last year, there were no Apprenticeship vacancies advertised.

Permanent Employees:

Fourteen vacancies were advertised in the period (two of which were unfilled). 125 applications were received and 54 candidates shortlisted. There were 14 successful candidates. On three occasions there was more than one successful candidate per vacancy.

In comparison, for the same period last year, there were nine vacancies advertised, one unfilled, 178 applications received, 33 candidates shortlisted and 12 successful candidates. On one occasion there was more than one successful candidate per vacancy.

Training/Development:

253 places had been 'taken up' with regard to off the job training.

Discipline:

There were no disciplinary actions during the period.

Grievances (including Harassment/Bullying)

There were 9 grievances lodged during this period (one group of 7 employees).

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Labour Turnover:

There had been 48 leavers during the period, which included 9 Apprentices who had successfully completed the Apprenticeship Framework; and 28 employees transferred under TUPE to NEDDC.

Voluntary Leavers:

There had been 11 voluntary leavers during the period.

Dismissals:

There were no dismissals during the period.

Redundancies:

There were two redundancies during the period.

Ill Health Retirements:

There were no ill health retirements during the period.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that the Equalities Monitoring Report for the period 1st January 2012 to 31st March 2012 be received.

76. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS 2011/12

The Senior Human Resources Officer presented an annual report in respect of Sickness Absence/Occupational Health Statistics for 2011/12.

The sickness absence target for 2011/12 was eight days with an out turn of 7.83 days compared to 7.97 days in 2010/11. A break down of the figures for 2011/12 by department and by long term/short term sickness absence was included in the report for Members information.

For Members information, the top three causes of sickness absence for 2010/11 and 2011/12 was included in the report along with a break down of the reasons for all long term sickness absence.

It was noted that ten routine health surveillance clinics had been held during the 2011/12 financial year and a break down of dates was included in the report.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that the sickness absence/occupational health statistics report for the period 2011/12 be received.

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

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson

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.

78. EXIT INFORMATION 1ST APRIL 2011 TO 31ST MARCH 2012

The Senior Human Resources Officer presented a report in respect of Exit Information regarding permanent employees leaving the Authority for the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012, with comparisons for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011.

There were 13 leavers in the period 2010/11 and 18 leavers in the period 2011/12. A break down by department was provided for both these periods for Members information.

In 2010/11, two leavers returned their Exit Questionnaires and in 2011/12, seven leavers returned their Exit Questionnaires. A break down of the reasons provided by employees for leaving the Authority was also included in the report.

A Unison representative queried the number of leavers for Community and Street Services provided in the report which he believed was incorrect. The Senior Human Resources Officer replied that she would check the figure and contact the Unison representative directly.

Moved by C. Hirst, seconded by Councillor E. Watts

RESOLVED that the report be received.

79. DRAFT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 4

The Senior Human Resources Officer presented a report in respect of the draft Social Media Policy.

A Unison representative stated that the Unions welcomed and supported the policy as sensible guidance for employees. However, one concern had been raised with regard to the training being delivered on the general IT policy, which includes social media network, where the trainer was advising people not to put their employer down. The Unions would hope that the vast majority of employees would present a positive representation of the Council; most staff are proud to work for the Council and should be free to put who employs them as part of their profile. It does not affect

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the policy but the Unions would like to clarify with the trainer that they would rather it be a positive comment than a negative one.

A Unison representative stated that although she supported the policy she could not recall being consulted on it. The Chair replied that this would be noted.

Councillor Bowman queried if the reference to photos/video clips in the policy included photographs taken of Sherwood Lodge that appear in the local press which had been taken on the premises without apparent permission.

The Chief Executive Officer replied that this was a social media policy and a newspaper was not part of the social media scope.

A short discussion took place.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by C. Hirst

RECOMMENDED that subject to the above feedback from the Unions, the draft Social Media Policy be referred to Council for approval.

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

80. **DRAFT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 4**

The Senior Human Resources Officer presented a report in respect of the draft Recruitment and Selection Policy. The policy was new and had been produced as a result of a recommendation from Internal Audit.

The Senior Human Resources Officer advised the meeting that where the report referred to "*the policy introduces one new aspect on page 51 (bottom bullet point)*", this should state "*...bottom bullet point of part 4 of page 46*" in the agenda. Further, the policy referred to Directors and Heads of Service and this would be changed to Directors, Assistant Joint Directors and Heads of Service.

A Unison representative stated that the Unison fully welcomed and supported the principle in the policy that suitable posts on Grades 1 and 2 are advertised as 'Apprenticeship First' posts but would like clarity on how the process will work. Who would be involved in the process in what determines what is a suitable grade 1 and 2 post and where and how are those decisions going to be made. The Union requests that a clear process is set out on how that decision is reached. The Senior Human Resources Officer replied that she would raise this with the Joint Assistant Director of Human Resources.

The Unison representative further stated that Unison requested that parts 1 to 4 is the Recruitment and Selection Policy and part 5 onwards is removed and that this is the procedure to implement the policy.

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Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by C. Hirst

RESOLVED that (1) parts 1 to 4 is the Recruitment and Selection Policy,

(2) part 5 onwards be removed from the policy and becomes the procedure to implement the policy.

RECOMMENDED that subject to the above amendments, the draft Recruitment and Selection Policy be referred to Council for approval.

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

The meeting concluded at 1140 hours.