

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a reconvened meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Wednesday 30th January 2013 at 1100 hours.

PRESENT:-

Council Representatives:-

Councillor E. Watts - Chair

Councillors R.J Bowler, K. Bowman, Mrs P.M Bowmer, J.A Clifton, H.J Gilmour, B.R Murray-Carr, A.M Syrett, A.F Tomlinson and G.O Webster.

Unison Representatives:-

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

Unite Representatives:-

S. Sambrook, T. Walker, M. Hill and B. Elliott.

Also in attendance at the meeting was M. Young (Unison Regional Coordinating Officer East Midlands) and C. Dodsworth (Electrician) for Minute No. 820 only).

Officers:-

A. Grundy (Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll), P. Wilmot (Human Resources Manager) and A. Bluff (Democratic Services Officer).

813. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor D. McGregor, W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer) and R. Farnsworth (Unison).

814. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

815. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

816. MINUTES – 7TH JUNE 2013

Minute 73 – UECC Terms of Reference

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll reported that it had been considered and agreed at an informal meeting of UECC on 24th January 2013, to propose at the next formal meeting of UECC that the ACAS definition of consultation, from the ACAS booklet 'Employee communications and consultation' (August 2009), be adopted in the Council's Constitution.

The definition is:

Consultation is the process by which management and employees or their representatives jointly examine and discuss issues of mutual concern. It involves seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information. Consultation does not remove the right of managers to manage – they must still make the final decision – but it does impose an obligation that the views of employees will be sought and considered before decisions are taken.

The ACAS definition would replace the existing definition of 'consultation' at part 3 (iv) in the Terms of Reference for UECC.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor A.M. Syrett
RECOMMENDED that (1) the ACAS definition replace the existing definition of 'consultation' at part 3 (iv) in the Terms of Reference for UECC.

(Solicitor to the Council / Head of Democratic Services)

Minute 74 regarding Minute 956 of the UECC meeting held on 7th March 2013 – Union Web Page on Council's Intranet site.

A Unison representative advised the meeting that no progress had been made in relation to the Unions having their own web page on the Council's intranet site. This was because meetings had not yet taken place between the Unions and the Solicitor to the Council.

Minute 74 regarding Minute 964 of the UECC meeting held on 7th March 2013 – Equalities Monitoring Report.

The Unison representative also advised the meeting that discussions had not yet taken place with the management side in relation to the Equalities Monitoring report being presented annually at future meetings.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll further reported that at the informal meeting of UECC held on 24th January 2013, Members had indicated that membership of the Committee would be discussed prior to Annual Council in May 2013 on the basis of a proposal of six representatives from the Employer's side and

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

six representatives from the Employees' side, on the understanding that on the Employer's side provision was to continue for an Equalities member place.

In relation to the frequency of reporting on Equalities Monitoring Data, the Equalities Monitoring Officer had advised that quarterly monitoring continue. The next meeting of UECC in March would provide a report on the previous three quarters Equalities Monitoring Data.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson
RESOLVED that the minutes of a Union / Employee Consultation Committee held on 7th June 2012 be approved as a correct record.

(Solicitor to the Council / Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll / Unions / Head of Democratic Services)

817. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2012

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in relation to sickness absence / occupational health statistics for the period July to September 2012.

The target for sickness absence for July to September 2012 was 2 days per FTE and the outturn was 2.51 days in comparison to 2.39 days for the same period in 2011. A breakdown of these figures by department and by long term / short term sickness absence was attached to the report for information.

It was noted that the corporate target of 8 days would not be met this year and an outturn of 9.09 days was projected.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll had looked at the cases for long term sickness and there were a number of employees with serious illness or requiring operations. Human Resources were working with these employees through the procedures to help them and also making full use of the occupational health provider. A breakdown of the reasons for all long term sickness absence was detailed in the report.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor E. Watts.
RESOLVED that the sickness absence / occupational health statistics report for the period July to September 2012 be received.

818. MOBILE PHONE POLICY

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report in relation to revisions to the Mobile Phone Policy.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

ICT were now proposing a revised policy as the current mobile phone policy was no longer fit for purpose due to changes in technologies deployed and deployment of mobile working solutions. The revised policy addressed these issues and provided further guidance and clarity on best practice usage.

A Unison representative queried personal use of telephones being restricted and raised that some officers pay a quarterly sum plus cost of any calls made for personal use. The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll replied that this was covered in paragraph 4.4 of the policy.

The Unison representative further queried use of camera phones being limited to business purposes only and sought assurance that an employee would not be penalised if they used a camera phone for personal use. The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll replied that the Authority wouldn't seek to penalise the employee but other policies would come into play if any images contravened the policies.

A short discussion took place.

It was noted that some employees carried camera phones in relation to their work, i.e., Leisure staff for events and CAN Rangers and Environmental Health officers for use of evidence gathering.

The Chair stated that the paragraph in the policy relating to use of camera phones used the word 'should' (be limited to business purposes only) and he felt that this was appropriate.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr
RECOMMENDED that the Council be recommended to adopt the revised Mobile Phone Policy.

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

819. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves 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.

The Unions sought Committee's approval that C. Dodsworth (Electrician) be invited to attend the exempt part of the meeting for the following item of business.

C. Dodsworth entered the meeting.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

820. GRIEVANCE – MATTER OF PRINCIPLE EXEMPT PARAGRAPH 4

The Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll presented a report which gave details of a grievance raised by the electricians employed by the Council.

The Director of Neighbourhoods had received the grievance in March 2012 and had subsequently advised that the electricians' grievance raised a matter of principle.

Paragraph 8 of the Council's Guidance to Senior Managers on Handling Grievances states "*Where it is agreed between the parties that the grievance is a matter of principle, then the grievance will be submitted to the next scheduled Union Employee Consultation Committee.*"

The trade unions had requested that the matter be referred to this Committee for consideration.

A lengthy discussion took place.

The report stated that the fundamental issue was clarification in the grading review procedure of what constituted 'line management'.

A further discussion took place.

It was agreed that the appropriate wording to accommodate both the employees side and the employers side be considered outside of the meeting.

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

RESOLVED that (1) the report be received,

(2) the appropriate wording to accommodate both the employees side and the employers side be considered outside of the meeting.

(Assistant Director of Human Resources and Payroll / Unions)

The meeting concluded at 1140 hours.