

## **JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM**

6 April 2004  
(4.30-5.45pm)

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Smart (Chair), Adigun-Harris, Bradnack, Dryden, Stebbings, White, Graham Cuffley (Unison), Richard O'Leary (GMB).

**Also Present:** Councillor Reid , Executive Councillor for Commercial & Human Resources (for items 1-6)

### **1. MINUTES – 8 January 2004**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2004 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were none.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

### **4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The following Councillors declared personal interests: Councillor Smart as a member of ATL, Councillor Adigun-Harris as a member of NUT, Councillor Dryden as a member of Amicus (and his wife as a member of Unison), Councillor White as a member of Smoke Free Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

### **5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

### **6. CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND SAFETY WORK PLANS 2003/4 AND 2004/5**

The Head of Environmental Health & Waste Strategy tabled the appendices which had been omitted from the report. He highlighted key areas of action taken and those where there was still more to do.

Graham Cuffley (Unison) said it was important that the Council was complying with the legislation as it was not only an employer but an organisation tasked with enforcement of other organisations. He emphasised the importance of contractors maintaining the same standards as were required of in-house teams. He thought that the substance misuse policy struck a good balance.

Richard O'Leary (GMB) confirmed that the unions and management had worked well together over the year.

Councillor White welcomed the actions planned on smoking at work particularly because of the risk of being sued for illnesses associated with the effects of passive smoking.

The Chair welcomed the reduction in accidents.

## **7 ORAL UPDATE ON SINGLE STATUS**

The Head of Human Resources tabled a short summary of progress since the last meeting on 8 January:

### **Job Evaluation Appeals**

- 1 More than 80 appeals had been received from those staff who received letters on 1 December 2003
- 2 Panels started on 16 February and were scheduled to end in early May.
- 3 By Friday 2 April, 63 appeals had been heard and of these:
  - 34 (54%) moved up a pay band (but not necessarily to a higher salary)
  - 29 jobs (46%) had stayed on the same pay band (NB some posts secured additional factor points but these were insufficient to move them into the next pay band)
  - 10 jobholders (29%) received an increase in pay backdated to 1 January 2004
  - 2 postholders withdrew their appeal since their panel date was confirmed.

### **Consolidated Pay Groups**

- 1 Between January and March negotiations were completed with the Trades Unions for 96 staff in Car Parks (37), Park & Ride (15), Arts & Entertainments (22), CCTV team (11) and Community Services (11).
- 2 Any existing shift allowances, bonuses and other odd allowances had been consolidated with base pay to determine assimilation to the new pay bands. This was the same principle applied to City Services staff. Savings would come from new staff being appointed on the entry points of the pay band rather than the higher points where existing staff had been assimilated to.
- 3 In addition, a single % allowance had been agreed for each group based on shift patterns. This would ensure consistency across the different groups of staff whilst fairly recognising the differences in work patterns.
- 4 A key principle had been to ensure that staff did not lose significantly overall. It had been necessary to agree protection payments for 12 people of £377p.a. (6 people), £826 p.a. (5 people) and £2,934 p.a. (1 person).
- 5 Letters and information packs went to the staff affected on 1 April, with pay changes being backdated to 1 January 2004. There was a right of appeal against the Job Evaluation score and any appeals would be heard in June.
- 6 Staff based at Ditchburn Place and Stanton House also received letters on 1 April and had the right of appeal. Their pay package was reviewed for the application of consolidated pay but this was agreed to be inappropriate given their complex and very individual shift patterns. They would continue to be paid via timesheets based on hours actually worked.

### **Green Travel Scheme**

- 1 Staff can claim 20% of their travel to work costs where these are incurred on public transport and they live more than 3 miles from their place of work.
- 2 The scheme started on 1 January 2004 and the monthly direct costs to the authority were £610 per month.
- 3 The Scheme would be reviewed in April.

### **Travel Allowances**

- 1 Changes to essential user payments were made from 1 January 2004 with a step down three and a half years protection scheme to offset impact for staff.
- 2 The essential user allowance was now paid at the NJC middle rate of £735 pa plus mileage for those staff who were required to travel 1000 miles per year on Council business and/or carry Council equipment and/or passengers.

### **Still to do...**

- 1 Fully document all recent agreements made with the Trades Unions for joint signature by 31 May 2004.
- 2 Market supplement policy to be agreed by May 2004.
- 3 Review of any outstanding allowances, including standby and call-out by 30 June 2004.
- 4 New pay progression criteria by 31 August 2004 for use from 1 April 2005.
- 5 Revise the acting up rules in line with the City Pay Bands.
- 6 Revise the honoraria policy.
- 7 Complete the review of career grades (already started in Environment & Planning)
- 8 Review of casual worker rates
- 9 Review pay line post appeals to check on cost, consistency and equality issues
- 10 Implement the recommendations from the Learning Development Group – due to start work in May 2004.
- 11 Work with managers to embed Partnership Working as outlined in the Partnership Agreement.

### **Steering Group chaired by the Chief Executive**

- 1 To reconvene in July to assess progress and address emerging issues
- 2 Internal Audit of Single Status cash envelope approach to ensure that objectives were achieved over time and projections were sound because of the impact for the Council's finances over the longer term (scheduled for January – March 2005).

The Head of Human Resources acknowledged that morale had been greatly affected by the outcome of the Single Status process.

Richard O'Leary (GMB) said that it had been a positive piece of work although difficult. Cambridge was ahead of other authorities.

Graham Cuffley (Unison) said that managing staff disappointment now was critical. It was necessary to help staff to understand that the whole process had to take into account the big picture. He acknowledged that the 'still to do list' involved large pieces of work many of which were medium and long term projects.

The Chair said that when comparisons were done with other authorities in the region, it was clear that it was good to have done it.

Councillor Dryden asked if any member of staff had involved a lawyer in their appeal.

The Head of Human Resources said that this was not allowed under City Council rules – only representation by the unions was permitted. Nationally a small group of lawyers was active in bringing equal pay claims against those local authorities that had not yet implemented job evaluation. The potential costs were significant.

The Union representatives confirmed that, should there be any equal pay issues, the agreed route with the Head of Human Resources was negotiation and only if these could not be resolved would the unions support formal claims to Employment Tribunal.

## **8 NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL 2004 PAY NEGOTIATIONS**

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report saying that the employers organisation anticipated a difficult year in the negotiations. The summary of their position and the City Council's position was given at section 4.2 of the report. The summary of the Trades Union position and the City Council's position was given at section 5.2 of the report.

Richard O'Leary (GMB) said that Cambridge had moved a long way in comparison to other authorities; however, there might still be a need for local arrangements.

Graham Cuffley (Unison) agreed, commenting that there did need to be flexibility because of differing working conditions across the country.

## **9 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Head of Human Resources gave a short presentation. The drivers for change were improving service delivery and prioritisation and better targeting of resources. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) had identified a number of issues:

- A strategy/framework to support a corporate focused approach
- To address 'silo' issues
- To develop as a 'Learning' organisation
- To provide stronger and clearer leadership

The Employers Organisation in 2003 defined Organisation Development as being 'about moving an organisation on by taking deliberate, planned steps to create an environment that will enable all staff to understand and deliver the Council's objectives. Responding to and working with stakeholders is key.'

The presentation covered what organisational development involves, what it should help with, barriers to success, how to develop the strategy and progress so far.

Graham Cuffley (Unison) welcomed the initiative and said that the danger was that no one owned the strategy and that it was important to recognise that changes were influenced by outside factors such as the public and central government. Gaining recognition from staff that change was a permanent feature of organisational life and that it presented opportunities rather than threats was critical. He warned that a top-down approach was a danger and that, as there would always be a skills gap, it was vital to develop current staff.

The Chair also welcomed the presentation saying that it flagged up important issues that would be being addressed in the months to come.

## **10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS TO 2005**

**Agreed** that the Forum would meet on the following dates at 4.30pm: Tuesday 29 June, Thursday 4 November 2004 and Thursdays 13 January and 10 March 2005.

The meeting ended at 5.45pm.

Chair