

JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

PRESENT: Councillors: Ward (Chair), Bradnack, C Rosenstiel, Shah and Smart
Liz Brennan (Unison), Kevin Roberts (GMB).
Executive Councillor Rod Cantrill.

Jackie Condon, Head of Human Resources, Rob Hammond, Chief Executive, Graham Watts, Director of City Services.

1. MINUTES – 9 November 2006

The minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared personal interests:
Councillor Shah as a member of University & College Union
Councillor C. Rosenstiel as a member of Amicus
Councillor Ward as his wife is a member of Amicus
Councillor Smart as a member of ATL.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. PEOPLE STRATEGY

Jackie Condon introduced the report and explained that the purpose of the strategy is to have a strategic framework of people related actions planned for the next four years. There are five themes, and the strategy is written deliberately in plain English for ease of comprehension. The framework will be revised as necessary over the four-year period.

The Chair asked if there were any comments. Cllr Cantrill thought that it was a good idea to incorporate the actions from a number of plans into one document that could be revised as necessary in response to changing needs of the organisation.

7 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The liP Post Recognition Review Report was summarised in the information item that was tabled at the meeting and introduced by Jackie Condon. Jackie was very pleased with how the process had gone. The feedback from liP was that CCC had met all the standards and was recommended to apply for higher status next time. An Action Plan had been produced and would be going to the Customer Services & Resources Scrutiny Committee next week for approval and then would be disseminated throughout the organisation. Members requested that this be made available to them and Jackie agreed.

ACTION JC

Rob Hammond was also very pleased with how the assessment went. He assured members that they would be kept informed of actions as they were progressed.

Liz Brennan commented on the point in 1.2 about the involvement of unions when developing Service Plans. She reported that Unison was shown the plans as late as October 2006 when it was too late for meaningful consultation. Kevin Roberts agreed that it was too late. Both hoped that the unions would be involved a lot earlier next time. Jackie confirmed that this would be a recommended action for the 2008/09 process. Cllr Rosenstiel suggested that there should be a meeting with the Unions after the annual statement had been produced, and Rob Hammond agreed.

ACTION RH

8 JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM PROPOSED REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Liz Brennan reported that some small changes had been made to the document tabled at the meeting to reflect discussions.

There was some discussion on the amendments, particularly the change as to what the forum would not discuss. Cllr Rosenstiel expressed concern about the deletion of the sentence 'This does not apply to matters affecting minority groups'. Jackie explained that it had been deleted to avoid positive discrimination but it would probably be better to simply reword the item. Jackie Condon suggested this could be changed to 'This does not apply to matters applicable only to individuals'. Cllr Cantrill and Jackie Condon agreed that the forum was simply to consider employee issues in a corporate sense rather than for an individual bringing an issue forward.

After more discussion it was agreed that the whole of the text in number 2 should be deleted and matters would be reviewed as necessary.

ACTION JC

9 UPDATE ON THE UNION DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

Jackie Condon tabled an update on progress with the work of the Customer Access Negotiating Group. The group had met five times and were due to meet three more times. The corporate report due at the end of January would effectively contain the agreement and status of each item. The principles of change had been agreed and is attached to these minutes.

Liz reported that there would be a negotiating meeting on 12th January at 10am. She commented that as data such as the results of job evaluations was sometimes late coming through, it was hard to ascertain whether agreement had been reached or not.

Jackie reported that all the jobs had now been evaluated and the job evaluation meeting had been rearranged.

Cllr Cantrill thought it was important that the new Head of Customer Services, Nova Roberts, should come on board to determine if the new structure was acceptable. Kevin explained that Nova had made slight changes to the structure, which had delayed the job evaluation exercise as the whole structure was needed in order to carry out the evaluation of individual jobs.

Liz expressed her concerns that the Business Process Re-engineering work had not been completed in parallel to the negotiations, as this could have an effect on back-office structures. As it had not yet been completed this could mean staff currently working in the back office would not be identified as potential “ring-fenced” applicants for the jobs in the Customer Service Centre, unlike their colleagues who currently have customer facing roles. Rob Hammond explained that it was very difficult to deliver this at this stage. Liz thought that managers should be looking at the structures that would be left behind after the restructuring of the customer facing roles, and Cllr Smart agreed that it would be important for individuals to know what they would be left with if they didn’t apply for jobs in the new Service. Cllr Cantrill commented that it would be harder for some departments than others to work out what would be left behind. Cllr Smart said that this process shouldn’t be rushed as mistakes might be made.

Cllr Bradnack thought that the Accommodation Strategy should also be brought to this forum for discussion, and not just CS&R, to consider the impact on staff. Cllr Cantrill suggested that work locations should be looked at as well as physical accommodation.

It was agreed that the Accommodation Strategy would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION JC

The meeting ended at 5.45 p.m.

Chair

**Joint Staff Employer Forum
11 January 2007**

**Update on progress with the work of the
Customer Access Negotiating Group**

Terms of Reference are attached. The Group has been discussing all issues set out within the schedule. The items outstanding are those for continued discussion on 12th and 22nd January 2007.

A report will go to Corporate Management Team on 30th January summarising progress with the Agreement covering the key staffing and employment issues for implementation of the Customer Access Strategy. We are seeking on 12th January to establish the current level of agreement on these issues in preparation for this report. Many of the issues are interlinked. We are seeking consensus on the 'whole' Agreement rather than individual parts, except as set out below.

The Group has met five times and three further meetings are planned for 12th January, 22nd January and 2nd February. A summary of the current status of each area of the Agreement follows:

Principles of Change

These have been agreed.

Recruitment Processes

Issues/Proposals

These are still to be agreed, but principles proposed are:

- For the Contact Centre and One Stop Shop jobs we propose to recruit in two phases – August 2007 and August 2008.
- Development Centres will be scheduled for staff to prepare them for recruitment to the new jobs. The Development Centres will be run in two phases to link with the two stage recruitment process.
- Recruitment Centres – ring fenced for 'at risk' staff group who have 30% or more customer facing duties in the first instance, less than 30% in the second instance and then opening out to all internal staff and external recruitment.
- Recruitment processes for 'specialist'/management level staff has still be discussed.

Application of the City Council's Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy

Issues/Proposals

- Competitive recruitment. Not 'slotting in', as jobs are significantly different, as opposed to 'substantially similar'.

This is still to be agreed.

- Ring-fenced group of staff.

This is still to be agreed (i.e. the list of individuals), but principles proposed are:

Those individuals whose current jobs contain 30% or more customer facing activity will be 'ring fenced' for jobs within the Customer Service Centre. These will in effect be the individuals whose current posts will be 'at risk' of redundancy.

Vacancy management process

This has been agreed.

Provisional Customer Services Organisation Structure **Competency Based Job Descriptions/Person Specs** **Working Patterns**

These are yet to be finalised. Progress to date is:

- Provisional structure produced.
- Draft Job Descriptions/Person Specs reviewed.
- Rostering systems and contracts/terms & conditions will be discussed further on an ongoing basis.

Job Evaluation

- A meeting of the Group to discuss initial job evaluation results is scheduled for 17 January.

Staff Development and Training

Discussions will continue on delivery of the following staff development proposals.

- Customer care skills, dealing with difficult customers, personal safety training and consideration of NVQs in Customer Care.
- Outplacement services for individuals at risk of redundancy.

Vicki Davidson
Human Resources Manager (Customer Service)

**Cambridge City Council
Customer Access Negotiating Group**

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To negotiate an Agreement covering key staffing and employment issues for the implementation of the Customer Access strategy.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 To agree the overall timetable for concluding an “Agreement” for the Council.
- 2.2 To agree the communication strategy for the negotiating period.
- 2.3 To agree the objectives and the underlying principles for the Agreement covering key employment issues for the introduction of the Customer Access Strategy.
- 2.4 To negotiate, with a view to reaching agreement, all items within scope.

3 Timescale

- 3.1 Formal negotiations to start from 1 October 2006 and be completed no later than the end of February 2007.

4 Scope

- 4.1 The key tasks and dates are summarised as:

Tasks	Target completion dates
Principles of change management for the Customer Access Strategy	27 October & 8 November
Agree recruitment processes for fair selection and equal opportunities throughout the service transition tranches	8 & 27 November
Application of Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy and vacancy management processes	8 & 27 November
Provisional Customer Service Centre Organisational Structure	7 & 19 December
Provisional working patterns (days, hours, shift patterns) and operational arrangements	7 & 19 December
Provisional Job Descriptions, Person specifications	7 & 19 December
Outcome of Job Evaluation	12 & 22 January
Staff development and training processes	12 & 22 January

5. Relationship to JTUG

JTUG will continue to receive regular updates on the progress of the Customer Access project, in terms of an overview, not the details of the Negotiating group progress

6. Customer Access Negotiating Group membership

Management Side	Staff Side
Jackie Condon – Head of HR	Liz Brennan – Branch Secretary (UNISON) Chris Jones
Vicki Davidson – HR Manager (Customer Access)	Kevin Roberts – Branch Secretary (GMB) Allen Brigham
Fran Barratt – Customer Access Programme Manager	