

JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

PRESENT: Councillors: Bradnack (Chair), Dryden, C Rosenstiel, Shah, Smart (Vice Chair), Ward
Liz Brennan (Unison). Kevin Roberts (GMB), Richard O'Leary (GMB Regional Representative).
Executive Councillor for Customer Services & Resources: Cllr Rod Cantrill.

Jackie Foglietta, Head of Human Resources.
Toni Ainley, Director of City Services

1. MINUTES – 28 August 2007

The minutes of the meeting of 28 August 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Re: Staff Survey

Jackie Foglietta, Head of Human Resources, gave an update on the Staff Survey. MORI had indicated that the overall response rate of 55% was good in comparison with other Local Authority staff surveys. The results of the survey would be reported to the Corporate Management Team in December after which an action plan would be developed in consultation with the unions. The results of the survey would be made available to all staff.

Councillor Smart proposed that the Action Plan come to the January meeting of the Forum and the meeting agreed.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared personal interests:

Councillor Bradnack as a member of NUT

Councillors C. Rosenstiel and Dryden as members of Unite (formerly Amicus)

Councillor Ward as his wife is a member of Unite (formerly Amicus)

Councillor Smart as a member of ATL.

Councillor Shah as a member of UCU (University Colleges Union)

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. Update on Customer Access

Jackie Foglietta, Head of Human Resources, said that the update was in response to a request from the Chair. She reported that there had been positive feedback from staff involved in the recruitment process for jobs in the Customer Service Centre (CSC). Residual restructurings were taking place for back office staff as services transferred into the CSC. Currently most jobs were initially being advertised for internal staff before being advertised externally. This was to help those staff at risk of redundancy. Additional support was being provided for those staff using funding from the Organisational Development budget. She also reported that Heads of Service might be finding the process difficult as they were having to take tough decisions about staff they had worked with for many years. Confidential support was being provided to them to help them manage the process.

Liz Brennan expressed some concerns about the timing of the residual restructuring. The Unions had reminded managers to get in touch with them as soon as possible in the process.

Kevin Roberts (GMB) said that it was important to give the Heads of Services support as planned because they needed to manage the implications for their service.

In reply to a question from Councillor Dryden, Jackie Foglietta confirmed that all those at risk of redundancy were being made aware of all jobs available in the Council.

Rod Cantrill, Executive Councillor, said that he had recently sat in on two staff briefings given by the Director of Customer & Democratic Services and the Chief Executive. Staff had seemed to be either neutral or positive in their responses. He thought that this was a critical point in the process.

Members asked questions about the numbers of those who had not applied, about how many jobs were still available and whether those who had not originally applied could still do so.

Liz Brennan (Unison) indicated that the unions had not yet seen the results of the survey of the 28 staff who had chosen not to apply for jobs in the Customer Service Centre. They understood that there were a variety of reasons for this and thought the fact that full information about the shift patterns had not been available at the time may have been a strong contributing factor.

Jackie Foglietta indicated that the action that would be taken in response to the survey results would depend on what the reasons for non-application were; e.g. shift patterns/expectations about the number of back office jobs that might be available/not attracted to the Customer Service Centre, etc.

The Chair asked that the results of the survey be brought to the January meeting of the Forum.

7 2007/08 Pay Award

Liz Brennan (Unison) acknowledged that this item had been overtaken by the decision taken by the Unison Executive to accept the pay offer due to the fact that the majority of members in favour of strike action had been very small. She emphasised that it was an unfortunate situation and that pressures about pay would not go away. The claim for next year would be made soon.

Councillor Dryden mentioned that the possibility of regional weightings had been mooted a few years ago. Liz Brennan said that the campaign had never got off the ground.

Jackie Foglietta, Head of Human Resources, said that as the majority of City Council posts were not classed as “key workers”, such a campaign would be difficult to implement locally.

8 Facilities Agreement

Jackie Foglietta, Head of Human Resources introduced the paper saying it was a joint one with the unions. The joint recommendation was either for a further 3 year agreement or to enter into a permanent agreement, both of which had conditions attached.

Councillor Smart supported the option of two full-time posts with a review in 3 years’ time.

Richard O’ Leary (GMB) gave the regional perspective, saying that Bedfordshire County Council, Luton District Council and Milton Keynes District Council had all agreed to permanent full time posts because of the rates of change occurring in local government.

Members discussed the condition at 5.2.2 of the paper: “Trade Union membership levels not falling below 50% of the workforce”.

After more discussion, it was agreed that the Head of Human Resources put forward the two options for the meeting of Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee in January, at which Councillor Cantrill as Executive Councillor would make a decision.

The meeting ended at 5.47p.m.

Chair