

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CENTRAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010 AT 1600 HOURS IN MEETING ROOM 1, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Maureen McKay, Barney Menzies and Kathy Morrice; Brian Reid and Liz McCulloch, both Unison; Janet Mitchell and Stuart Ross, both GMB; and Andy Wilson, UCATT.

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Alex McPhee, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support; Martin Rose, Head of Human Resources; George Park, Employee Relations Manager; Andrew Kennedy, Acting Head of Facilities Management and Gillian Hamilton, Administrative Officer.

ALSO ATTENDING: Arthur West, Trade Union Convener and Jim Winter, TGWU, Full Time Official.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Douglas Reid, Drew McIntyre and Jimmy Kelly; Jennifer Elliot and William Cree, both TGWU; Elizabeth Wilson, GMB; Billy McBurnie, AAEU; Tracey Dalling, Unison; Paul Bennett, UCATT; and Louise Gilmour, GMB, all Full Time Officials.

CHAIR: Arthur West, Trade Union Convener.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

1. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, it was agreed that Arthur West, Trade Union Convener be appointed as Chair.

EFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2011/2012 - 2013/2014 (SRRB2)

2. The Committee received a presentation from Alex McPhee, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support on the Council's Efficiency Strategy (SRRB2). There was also submitted by way of background a report dated 7 May 2010 by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Support, which had been submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet on 19 May 2010 for approval of a strategy to review the Council's revenue budget with the aim of continuously driving up efficiency levels and ensuring that resources are applied effectively to achieve the Council's key strategic outcomes (circulated).

The SRRB2 project would effectively be the Council's Efficiency Strategy to identify options to close the forecast spending gap of £35m over 3 years as a result of a reduction in funding from the Government.

The project would consist of 6 of strands ,viz:-

- (i) a business review programme;
- (ii) budget management and review;
- (iii) Fairer Scotland Fund Review;
- (iv) budget and performance review;

- (v) workforce planning review; and
- (vi) continuing engagement arrangements.

Following the presentation, the Trade Unions expressed appreciation at having the opportunity to share the difficult information contained in the presentation and Cabinet report and acknowledged the likely need for significant establishment downsizing, the various opportunities for achieving this, and the commitment to try to mitigate any negative impact on the local economy.

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

3. Martin Rose, Head of Human Resources then provided an verbal overview of 3 further reports approved by Cabinet following consultation with the Trade Unions, which dealt with:

Severance

- workforce reductions would be targeted according to business needs;
- There would be no broad trawls for severance; and
- New limits on maximum added years.

Redeployment

- redeployment policy has been reviewed;
- length of time on redeployment register to be identified at outset;
- fewer vacancies available; and
- role of Vacancy Review Group.

Competency Framework

- framework is an enhancement of EAGER
- identifies competencies and interventions to skill up employees; and
- linked to development matrix.

DISCUSSION

4. There followed an opportunity for discussion and it was noted:
- (i) Trade Union Senior Stewards would provide a formal response to the Efficiency Strategy. Involvement of Stewards at all levels would ensure consistent information to employees;
 - (ii) the timescale for implementation of savings actions would allow for full consultation;
 - (iii) the Trade Unions had already received enquiries from their members about severance opportunities. These should be passed to Human Resources or Line Managers and would be dealt with in confidence.
 - (v) whilst the Trade Unions acknowledged and wanted to link to the efficiency strategy process, there were very real concerns about the potential impact on members and services;
 - (vi) Trusts as an alternative delivery model (paragraph 3.2.3 of Cabinet report) was not advocated by the Trade Unions;

- (vii) Trade Unions felt it was their responsibility to try to negate as many redundancies as possible. They would also not raise hopes about redundancy packages; and
- (viii) there was a need for excellent communication with employees throughout the process, which should include joint Trade Union/Chief Executive statements and use of the Q and A model.

The meeting terminated at 1700 hours.