

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND CRAFTPERSONS)

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2002 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Eric Jackson, Daniel Coffey, John Weir and Finlay MacLean; Graeme Cumming (UNISON), Kate Connell (GMB), June Minnery (GMB), William Cree (TGWU), Andrew Wilson (UCATT), George Clemmy (AEEU), Ian Howat (AEEU), John Wales (GMB).

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources; Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services; John Walker, Head of Building and Works; Graham Haugh, Head of Personnel Services; George Park, Employee Relations Manager; Joe Rafferty, Health and Safety Manager; Stuart Gillan, Assistant Contracts Manager; and Gillian Hamilton, Administrative Officer.

ALSO ATTENDING: David Dorran (GMB) and Arthur West (UNISON), Joint Secretaries; Harry O'Neill, Full-time Officer (TGWU); and Frank Minnery, Full-time Officer (GMB).

APOLOGIES: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Harry Wilson and Provost Jimmy Boyd; Simon McFarlane, Full-time Officer (UNISON), Joe McLaren, Full-time Officer (UCATT), Brian Docherty, Full-time Officer (AEEU), Nigel Pimm (UNISON), Les Anderson (UNISON), Jennifer Elliot (TGWU) and Philip McGhee (TGWU).

CHAIR: Councillor Eric Jackson, Chair.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

1. It was resolved that under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. There was submitted and noted Minutes (circulated) of meeting held on 29 November 2001.

MATTERS ARISING

3.1 East Ayrshire General Employee Review (EAGER)

It was noted that a positive meeting including representatives of the staff side and the Personnel and Building and Works Sections had been held and that the EAGER scheme would be rolled out to manual and craft employees in the Building and Works Section within the next few months.

3.2 Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001

It was noted that there had been effective liaison on issues of concern between representatives of Personnel and the Trade Unions and staff transferring to the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care.

3.3 Use of Contract Hire Vehicles

The Joint Secretary (Manual and Craftpersons) highlighted the availability of the vehicle hire desk at Crookedholm and requested the Council's commitment to use this facility, where possible, and to confer with the Transport Section prior to entering into alternative long-term hire agreements.

The staff side, whilst recognising that an element of outside hire would always be necessary, undertook to keep this in mind.

It was noted

- (i) that there was a requirement for the Council's fleet to achieve best value against alternatives;
- (ii) that decisions on fleet configuration were linked to business operational requirements;
- (iii) that the Council was committed to developing a hire policy and new procedures; and
- (iv) that a report on this issue would be submitted to the next meeting of the JCC.

3.4 Request for Increased Apprentices for Building and Works and Transportation Sections

It was noted that the Council was reviewing the whole question of apprenticeship placements including the apprenticeship place within the Transport Section.

SINGLE STATUS UPDATE

4. There was submitted a report dated 8 March 2002 (circulated) by the Head of Personnel which provided an update on the Council's response to the Scottish Joint Council's Single Status Agreement.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the update report on the Council's response to the Single Status Agreement for Local Government employees;
- (ii) to note that the proposal to circulate Single Status Update #8, reviewed to include the outcome of the meeting of the SJC on 22 February 2002 on the single status implementation date with April pay slips as detailed in Paragraph 5.1 of the report would not be achieved. As an alternative, an article would be included in Eastwards which, it was thought, would be as effective as circulation via pay slips;
- (iii) to note that although April 2004 was the national end date for Single Status Agreement, where possible, any elements of the Agreement, including existing grading appeals on which there was currently a moratorium, would be implemented prior to that end date;
- (iv) that the Head of Personnel provide future update reports; and

- (v) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

5. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources on the Council's progress in response to its 2001/02 Health and Safety Action Plan and proposals for its 2002/03 Plan.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note progress with points detailed in the review of 2001/02 Health and Safety Action Plan appended to the report;
- (ii) to note that the Action Plan, with minor amendments which included (1) the reprioritisation of communication and (2) inclusion of control of fire risk, risk assessment procedures and slips, trips and falls, had been agreed by the Health and Safety Forum. Environmental issues would be progressed through an alternative Forum. Transportation of clients would be included in the Educational and Social Services Action Plan;
- (iii) to note that the Head of Personnel would report to the Senior Management Team on Risk Assessment; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

WORK LIFE BALANCE PROJECT

6. The Committee received a presentation by the Head of Personnel which provided an update on the Work Life Balance Project covering the background to the project, existing work life balance policies, the project plan, work life balance vision and issues arising from the attitude survey feedback.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note that, based on experience, the attitude survey response rate was reasonable;
- (ii) that subsequent surveys would highlight any issues arising from the survey;
- (iii) that the outcome of the survey was not a tablet of stone;
- (iv) that the next issue of Eastwards would be dedicated to reporting the results of the survey; and
- (v) that a progress report would be submitted to a future meeting of the JCC.

The Committee thanked the Head of Personnel for his presentation.

MANAGING ABSENCE

7. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources which provided absence information which will be recorded within the Council's Statutory Performance Indicators for the year ended 31 December 2001.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the general increase in absence rates against the planning average;

- (ii) that a further report on absence rates would be submitted to the JCC in 12 months time;
- (iii) to note that more detailed information was required by the Trades Unions in respect of reasons for absence and that this matter would be discussed with Departmental Directors;
- (iv) to note that the Trade Unions advocated a more flexible and more open minded approach to dealing with long-term absences and return to work;
- (v) that there would be discussion at the next JCC Meeting on therapeutic return to work/support for employees;
- (vi) that progress reports on managing absence would be submitted to future meetings of the JCC; and
- (vii) otherwise, to note the report and the Appendices.

EAST AYRSHIRE GENERAL EMPLOYEE REVIEW (EAGER) SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

8. There was submitted and noted a report dated March 2002 (circulated) by the Head of Personnel on the origins of the East Ayrshire General Employee Review (EAGER); reviewing developments in the process since its introduction; advising of the current state of play with implementation of EAGER; and informing about future plans for the development of the process and its further implementation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

9. There was submitted a request (circulated) by the Manual and Craft Workers Convenor that the Council invite representatives of the Local Government Pension Scheme to a meeting with a select group of the Central JCC to discuss the future security of the Pension Scheme.

It was noted that a meeting with representatives of the Local Government Pension Scheme had been arranged for 24 April 2002 at 1000 hours.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY INSURANCE

10. There was submitted a request (circulated) by the Manual and Craft Workers Convenor for clarification of the cover provided by the Council's Employers Liability Insurance, particularly in respect of exemptions of accident cover whilst employees are at work.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note that the Council's Employers Liability Insurance was in line with that held by other Local Authorities and in accordance with national provisions;
- (ii) to note that very few employers financed personal accident cover; and
- (iii) to note that advice was being sought regarding the best deal available for personal contribution to personal accident cover, which information would be promoted when available.

FAIR TRADE

11. There was submitted and noted a report (circulated) by the APT & C Convenor on the Council and the Trade Union side involvement in promoting Fair Trade goods.

TIMETABLE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12. There was submitted a report dated 7 March 2002 (circulated) by the Joint Secretaries seeking approval for a Meetings Calendar for 2002/2003.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the timetable for future meetings and pre-meetings as set out in Paragraph 2.3 of the report; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1505 hours.