

AGENDA ITEM 2

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE
2007 AT 2.30 PM

PRESENT: Employer's Side

Councillors M R Alexander, A P Jackson,
D A A Peek, M Wood

Staff Side (UNISON)

Chris Cooper (Chairman)
Rob Ball, Jane Sharp, Andy Stevenson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor J O Ranger

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Anne Freimanis | - Chief Executive |
| Lorraine Blackburn | - Committee Secretary |
| Peter Dickinson | - Health and Safety
Officer |
| Helen Farrell | - Human Resources
Officer |
| Judith Fear | - Interim Director
People and
Organisational
Services |
| Chris Gibson | - Principal Auditor |
| Shona Grey | - Human Resources
Officer |

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

**1 ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY AND
CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report

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on the Anti-fraud and Corruption Strategy and the Confidential Reporting Code. The report was last revised in May 2004 and included a number of minor changes to take account of changes in legislation. The report had been submitted to Corporate Management Team and Head of Services' comments had been incorporated. Comments from UNISON had also been incorporated and were in agreement with the Codes.

The Panel supported the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Confidential Reporting Codes.

RECOMMENDED – that the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Confidential Reporting codes be approved and adopted.

2 **SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE 2007; ALCOHOL DRUG AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY 2007; MANAGING VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION POLICY 2007; MANAGING THE CRIMINAL RECORD BUREAU PROCESS POLICY 2007**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report which updated existing policies in accordance with new legislation and regulatory good practice and guidelines.

(A) Smoke Free Workplace:

The Secretary to the Employer's Side commented on the new "no smoking" legislation and the Council's role, the need to designate areas and requirements regarding staff smoking in uniform. A map showing designated smoking areas was now available.

(B) Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse:

The Secretary to the Employer's Side reminded the LJP that it was the policy of the Council to keep a record of employees who came to work under the influence (of a substance) but that the

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Council would also provide support and advice where needed.

(C) Managing Violence and Aggression:

The Secretary to the Employer's Side reminded the Panel of the Council's duty of care to safeguard employees in relation to violent customers. Roles, responsibilities and systems of control in relation to risk management were highlighted together with the need to observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

(D) Managing the Criminal Record Bureau Process:

The Secretary to the Employer's Side commented that the Council used the services of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) (eg working with children and vulnerable adults) to carry out disclosures on its behalf. Such information also observed the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

All the Policies had been discussed and supported by UNISON.

The Leader commented on the need to balance an individual with a criminal record with their eligibility for employment. It was felt that the CRB Policy should be amended to include the need to undertake additional references, suggesting that Officers seek advice from Human Resources when making such judgements. Further advice might be available from the Local Employers' Organisation.

The Panel supported the policies, as now detailed and amended.

ACTION

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the policy in relation to Managing the Criminal Record Bureau Process be amended to include the need to undertake additional references and to seek advice from Human Resources when making such judgements, including the need to seek advice from the Local Employers' Organisation where necessary.

(B) the Policies as amended be agreed and adopted.

3 CHRISTMAS EVE 2007

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report seeking closure of the Council offices on Monday 24 December 2007. The operational difficulties were outlined in terms of allowing an odd day of opening. Past experience had shown that the Christmas week was very quiet and there were precedents in the past where the offices had been closed in the Christmas week when there had been an odd day of opening sandwiched between two or more days of closure. The Secretary to the Staff Side commented that it was uneconomical to open up for one day and felt that the public would not suffer as a result of the closure.

The Leader commented that there were people observing the Council and the public had an expectation to be able to contact the Council that week. It was hoped that officers would show flexibility in terms of allowing staff time off.

The Chief Executive commented that Christmas Eve was not one of the busiest days but that there would be people who would use the Council's services.

A Member commented that only shops would be open and he doubted that there would be an expectation of using the Council's services.

ACTION

A motion to adopt the recommendation in the report of the Secretary of the Staff Side to close the Council Offices on Monday 24 December 2007 and to grant an additional day's leave to staff was not supported by the Employer's Side and therefore was referred to the Human Resources Committee.

RECOMMENDED - that the issue of closing the offices on Christmas Eve be referred to Human Resources Committee.

RESOLVED ITEMS**4 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

Nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chairman and Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2007/08.

RESOLVED - that (A) Chris Cooper be appointed Chairman for the Civic Year 2007/08; and

(B) Councillor M Wood be appointed Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2007/08.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2006 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6 CONSTITUTION, POWERS AND DUTIES

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the powers and duties of the Local Joint Panel's Constitution. It was noted that the Constitution was last revised in June 2006 and as such, needed minor amendment to reflect ongoing changes in the Council's restructuring.

ACTION

Specific amendments suggested were:

Section 2 – “Representation” paragraph 2, line three - Deletion of “Assistant Director (Law and Control) and the insertion of “Director of Neighbourhood Services”

Section 6 (e) Deletion of the title “Assistant Director (Human Resources)”.

It was noted however that other minor non-material amendments to the Constitution might be necessary to take account of the ongoing internal re-structuring.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to make non-material amendments to the Constitution as necessary to take account of ongoing internal restructuring including those referred to within Sections 2 and 6 of the Constitution; and

DNS

(B) the report be noted.

7 SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 19 MARCH AND 14 MAY 2007

The Minutes of the Safety Committee held on 19 March and 14 May 2007 were received.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 19 March and 14 May 2007 be received.

8 MATERNITY LEAVE COVER

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report concerning the need to review maternity leave arrangements, as temporary cover was not being arranged to cover staff in key front line services for those staff who were either on maternity leave or were about to start maternity leave. It was felt that this could cause stress to existing staff.

ACTION

The Work and Families Act 2006 had introduced a number of new rights for parents and carers including the possibility of extending paid maternity leave to up to a year.

The Staff Side was aware of the need to ensure that the budget for 2007/08 was not exceeded but by not providing adequate cover impacted on service delivery and could impact on the health of staff.

The Leader commented that Managers were paid to make judgements about managing resources and delivering services. The 6% vacancy turnover was thought to be achievable. The Secretary to the Staff Side acknowledged that Managers were under pressure to make savings and that the budget was determined by the Council including the need to achieve a 6% vacancy turnover in the salary budget. The Secretary to the Employer's Side commented that Managers were not always made aware of how long an individual may be away from work. It was noted that the new Act would also allow in the future, men to take paternity leave for six months in place of their wife taking extended maternity leave.

It was suggested that the matter be reviewed again in October 2007 with a further report back.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be noted; and

(B) the Secretary to the Employer's side report back to the October 2007 Meeting.

9 INTERNAL SERVICES RESTRUCTURE

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report concerning the proposed restructuring within the Directorate of Internal Services. The Secretary to the Staff side commented that there were original concerns over the proposals to split IT between service heads and transferring Land Charges to revenue benefits. Whilst decisions had now been made not to split those sections, other concerns

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related to people below Head of Service eg in relation to Facilities Management merging with Customer Services. Staff in these areas still needed to know where they stood.

RESOLVED – that the UNISON response appended to the report now submitted be noted.

10 STAFF PARKING ARRANGEMENTS IN BISHOP'S STORTFORD

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report concerning the under use of the Council's car parks following the opening of the multi-storey car park. The report requested that free car parking be made available for all staff in Bishop's Stortford in the town centre car parks and that The Causeway car park be redesignated long stay.

The Secretary to the Staff Side commented on the fifteen minute walk from the town centre to Grange Paddocks, alternatively having to pay £3.20 in the long stay car parks if a space was available. She commented that staff parking at Grange Paddocks was for a temporary period, was not cost effective, was unpleasant in bad weather, and not convenient when individuals were in a hurry or those carrying heavy loads. Free local parking would put colleagues in Bishop's Stortford in line with colleagues in Wallfields and would give staff a positive view bearing in mind of the Mori Poll which saw staff in Bishop's Stortford as less contented.

A Member commented that Basbow Lane and Apton Road were now long stay which had occurred as a result of the closure of the Park and Ride.

The Leader commented that this was not about revenue but about being seen to local businesses as being equitable in their attitude to staff and parking. It was noted that employers purchased Smart Cards for their staff and there was no reason why they could not continue to do this. The Council was providing an opportunity for parking but this required an extra walk. When required, staff could park in

ACTION

The Causeway for periods of time which gave staff a degree of flexibility.

The Secretary to the Employer's side commented that some Councils charged their staff to park in the car parks and that it was not a right to be given a free parking space.

The Leader undertook to give a personal commitment to use Grange Paddocks whenever he could.

The Chief Executive commented that the Director of Internal Services had been asked to investigate use of the car park behind the Council Offices from a "needs" basis. CMT had received a report on staff arrangements for making drops and collections and staff with a medical or incapacity need. CMT had agreed that guidelines be drafted and implemented as soon as possible.

The Secretary to the Staff Side welcomed the report to CMT but recognised that there were only 12 spaces. There were issues with people who had to load up and drop off then walk back to the office again. As such this was a time cost to both the Council and the Employee.

The Chairman referred to the parking in Hertford and asked how employers reacted to Hertford Staff being able to park on site. The Leader commented that the parking arrangements were not the same in Hertford. Staff would be displacing people in Bishop's Stortford. The multi-storey car parking at Sainsburys was discussed.

A Member commented that he was disappointed that staff could not park in the multi-storey. He stressed that the car parking issue had not yet settled in terms of how full it was going to be, given that further developments in the town were planned.

The Leader confirmed that the town was changing and that this needed to be reviewed again in six months time.

ACTION

A motion to adopt the recommendation of the Secretary of the Staff Side to allow free car parking for all staff in the Town Centre Car Parks and re-designating The Causeway car park as long stay was not supported by the Employer's Side and therefore fell.

RESOLVED – that the Secretary to the Staff Side report back in nine months.

J Sharp

11 DATE OF FUTURE MEETING

RESOLVED - that the next meeting be held on 10 October 2007.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

Chairman
Date