

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER
2011, AT 2.30 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillor Mike Wood (Chairman)
Councillors L Haysey and J Ranger

Staff Side (UNISON)

Mr C Clowes, Mrs B Dodkins, Mrs J Sharp and
Mr A Stevenson

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services

12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Alexander, A Jackson and Emma Freeman. It was noted that Councillor J Ranger was substituting for Councillor A Jackson.

13 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 June and 13 July 2011 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14 DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE POLICY

The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted a report raising issues of concern highlighted by staff, regarding the application of the Disturbance Allowance Policy. The report sought changes to the policy which would address the absence of a mileage rate payable for passengers and a revision to the method of calculating the route to and from the new office base, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

The Staff Side explained that there was no incentive to take passengers and thereby save the Council money and no incentive to car share. The Staff Side stated when the Policy was agreed there had not been sufficient consideration of the implications of using the “shortest” route for calculating the allowance where this was not the “normal” route to and from the new office base which is the case between Hertford and Bishop’s Stortford given the road network. The Staff Side explained that for many staff the allowance based on the shortest route would be much less than that based on the most natural route – one employee had calculated that they would be £500 worse off a year based on the mileage bands which had been agreed. The Staff Side stated that most staff used the quickest route to Hertford which was the A120 and then the A10 rather than go along relatively less safe tiny country lanes. It was felt that the disturbance allowance was being applied too rigidly and the Staff Side felt that the Council was saving money on the relocation and that there should be some compensation to staff for the additional mileage and changes to working patterns. It was calculated that 99% of staff drive to Hertford using the A120 and A10.

The Director of Internal Services explained that the policy was being applied as agreed. The policy was to determine a monetary amount to compensate for the added cost and inconvenience arising from relocation. It was not the intention to require anyone to travel a particular route. So, employees wanting to save petrol costs could use the shortest route, those to whom the time was more important could go the

longer but generally quicker route. The use of post code data ensured consistency of treatment and Human Resources were not asked to interpret the policy in any particular way. He agreed that there was less cost to the Council using the basis set out in the agreed policy. Members acknowledged that the majority of staff from Bishop’s Stortford would travel using the A120 and A10 - the quickest route. It was considered that the Staff Side’s request was reasonable. Clarification was sought for the information of the HR Committee on how a change to the scheme would impact financially on the Council.

Members supported the recommendation that car drivers be paid 5p per mile for every passenger they take to and from the contractual office base who would otherwise be entitled to disturbance payment

RESOLVED – that (A) car drivers be paid 5p per mile for every passenger they take to or from the new contractual site office base who would otherwise be entitled to the mileage element of the Disturbance Payment to encourage car sharing and in the interests of “green” travel; and

(B) the Disturbance Allowance Scheme to use the “quickest” rather than the “shortest” route to and from the new contractual base.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Chairman
Date