

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN  
ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
ON MONDAY, 17 MAY 2004 AT  
10.30 AM

PRESENT EMPLOYER'S SIDE

Councillor H G S Banks, M Carver, N C Poulton, M Wood.

STAFF SIDE (UNISON):

Robert Ball, Andy Stevenson, Peter Otway.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bernard Perry	- Assistant Director (Human Resources)
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor Carver be nominated as the Chairman of the Local Joint Panel for the municipal year 2004/05.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

ACTION

2 **(a) ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY  
(b) CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE AND  
(c) CODE OF CONDUCT**

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**The Assistant Director (Human Resources) submitted three inter-connected reports. These had been produced and aimed to establish and maintain, a framework of internal control which promoted the prevention and detection of any fraud and corruption perpetrated by its Members, employees and others who may attempt to obtain the Council's assets or services.**

**(a) Anti Fraud & Corruption Strategy**

The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy was based on a series of comprehensive and inter-related procedures designed to avoid instances of fraudulent or corrupt acts. It also aimed at encouraging prevention, promoting detection and identifying a clear pathway for investigation. These procedures:-

- Encouraged a culture of honesty and openness in all of the Council's dealings;
- Prevention – the role of staff and Members;
- Detection and Investigation – detection/investigatory systems.

**(b) Confidential Reporting Code**

The Assistant Director (Human Resources) explained that the Confidential Reporting Code complemented the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and aimed to provide employees with the opportunity (without fear of recrimination), to disclose any allegations of malpractice within the Authority; of any impropriety or breach of procedure or any deficiency in the delivery of the service. All reports whether verbal or written would be treated in confidence.

The financial procedures highlighted officer reporting lines to be followed in the event of any irregularity or suspected irregularity involving Fraud and Corruption and the processes to be followed. The point was made that the code was flexible and would be reviewed on a regular basis.

Clarification was given on the issue of benefit fraud cases valued at £1000 or greater.

(c) Code of Conduct

It was noted that the Code of Conduct incorporated points from existing laws, regulations and conditions of service for the guidance of all staff, to help maintain and improve standards and protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism . The Assistant Director (Human Resources) commented that it complemented Council Policies and Staff Codes including the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and the Confidential Reporting Code.

The Panel welcomed the codes referred to by the Assistant Director (Human Resources). Assurances were sought and provided that the codes would continue to be flexible and be reviewed at regular intervals.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Executive approve the (a) Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy; (b) the revised Confidential Reporting Code and (c) the Code of Conduct.

**3 CHIEF OFFICER GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

The Assistant Director (Human Resources) commented on the need to agree grievance and disciplinary procedures for Chief Officers in order to improve the health and sustainability of the organisation. He commented that the processes were similar to the processes followed for other officers of the Council.

The appendices to the report outlined the procedures to be followed in such circumstances. The various

stages were explained.

The Chairman welcomed the report and commented that it was good practise to have such procedures in place covering all tiers within the organisation.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Executive approve the Chief Officer Grievance and Disciplinary procedure.

#### **4 HEALTH SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY**

The Assistant Director (Human Resources) submitted a report detailing the progress made in updating a Health Safety and Welfare Policy. The document had been agreed by the Director's Board and the Safety Committee.

It was noted that the new arrangements provided for the establishment of a health safety and welfare team who would be charged with identifying key themes to ensure that key legislative requirements were in place and would inform the safety committee of actions needed. It was noted that in developing the new policy there had been substantial consultation, (including UNISON), to develop the document to more rigorous standards, ensuring welfare was addressed as a strategic issue in terms of the working environment.

The Assistant Director commented on the lack of volunteers to carry out safety inspections. However, he was confident that the Council now had a policy which was robust and that staff were committed to making it work. The Policy would be monitored and any changes needed, would be subject to consultation with the Health Safety and Welfare Team, and Safety Committee.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Executive approve the revised Health Safety and Welfare Policy.

RESOLVED ITEMS

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2004 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2004

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2004 be received as a correct record.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting would take place early September 2004 at the Bishop's Stortford Council offices.

The meeting closed at 10.55 am