

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
WAYTEMORE ROOM, THE
CAUSEWAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD
ON MONDAY 7 AUGUST 2006 AT
2.00 PM

PRESENT: Employer's Side

Councillor M Wood (Chairman)
Councillors M R Alexander, L O Haysey

Staff Side (UNISON)

Robert Ball, Jane Sharp, Andy Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Anne Fisher	- Chief Executive
Gerald Balabanoff	- Interim Director Organisational Development
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Rosemary Jones	- Human Resources Officer
Tina Nash	- Head of Human Resources

11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman commented that he intended to change the order of business and would take Item 3 (the Minutes of Safety Committee) after Item 5 (Declarations of Interest).

The Chairman commented that it would be necessary to convene a further meeting of the Local Joint Panel in advance of the Human Resources Committee in October 2006. It was agreed that the additional meeting be held on 25 September 2006 in the Waytemore Room, Bishop's Stortford at 2.00 pm.

ACTION

Finally the Chairman commented that he had agreed to accept an urgent item of business onto the agenda from UNISON 'Officers Parking in Controlled Parking Zones.

RECOMMENDED ITEMACTION

12 **EMPLOYING AND RETAINING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The Secretary to the Employer's side submitted a report drafted to address the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 relating to people who became disabled during employment and those people with disabilities who applied for jobs with East Herts Council. The Policy and Procedure explained how the Council should deal with its obligations under the Act and provided a framework within which Managers should operate. The report would next be submitted to Human Resources Committee for approval.

The policy pulled together good practice and was explicit in terms of how to deal with matters correctly so that people were not disadvantaged and in making sure that an individual's development potential was fulfilled. It was noted that the policy had been agreed by Corporate Management Team, UNISON, the Council's Disability Advisor and the Valuing Diversity Action Group.

In relation to the policy dovetailing with buildings and premises, it was noted that the policy referred to "reasonable adjustments" in relation to access to work eg doors opening out, lift access and premises being wheelchair accessible. Two of the Council's premises did not meet legislative requirements. Concern was expressed by the Staff Side, that the top floor at Wallfields did not meet with specific disability requirements.

ACTION

The Secretary to the Employer's side commented on the need to do everything possible in order to become a model employer. It was noted that the Equality Commission would take an unfavourable view if the Council did not take on board the requirements of the DDA.

The Chairman requested that the top floor at Wallfields be investigated in relation to compliance with legislative requirements.

It was noted that there had been a number of legislative changes to Human Resources issues and a number of the policies were not in an electronic format. As such there was some doubt about which policies were current and which were not. The shortage of HR staff had not helped matters.

In the circumstances, Members felt that it would be helpful if the HR Section could prepare a list of policies relevant to the organisation, detailing those which had been amended and those which were currently out of date.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side undertook to prepare and circulate a list to Members of the Panel.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the procedure “Employing and retaining people with Disabilities” attached as Appendix ‘A’, be approved;

(B) the Secretary to the Employer's Side prepare a list of policies relevant to the organisation detailing those which had been amended and those which were currently out of date for circulation to Members of the Local Joint Panel; and

IDOD

ACTION

(C) the top floor at Wallfields be investigated to establish whether it complied with legislative requirements.

IDOD

RESOLVED ITEMS13 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2006 were submitted.

Minute 9 - Work / Life Balance

The Secretary to the Staff Side commented on the accuracy of the final paragraph of this minute and requested that the penultimate sentence which stated "The Chairman accepted..." be amended by the deletion of the words "... and suggested that, in future, rather than risk being misquoted it might be advisable to say nothing". The Local Joint Panel agreed to the amendment.

The Secretary to the Staff Side commented that a number of staff had queried why there had been no progress report on this issue and asked for clarification on what the delays were.

The Interim Director of Organisational Development commented that part of the delay had occurred before he and the Head of Human Resources were in post. He referred to the current flexi-time system and how some staff were disadvantaged by the system ie those who could not take off the time due to pressure of work.

The strategy had recently been discussed at the flexible working group and would then be considered by Corporate Management Team (CMT). It was noted that HR were under resourced and of the need to update many of the Council's HR policies following substantial legislative changes.

ACTION

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the Work/Life Strategy went beyond that laid down in Statute.

The Secretary to the Staff Side commented that other sections within the Council were keen to see the new system rolled out.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2006 as amended, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record; and

(B) the update on the Work / Life Balance Strategy be noted.

14 SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2006

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Safety Committee held on 10 July 2006 be received.

15 OFFICERS' PARKING IN CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES

The Chairman had agreed to accept an urgent item onto the agenda from UNISON.

The Staff Side referred to an agreed process which had been proposed in order to obtain a timed temporary dispensation. An officer had attempted to follow that procedure recently, but was refused a dispensation to a particular location in Bishop's Stortford. It was noted that there were no public car parks close by and the officer would have needed to walk for approximately 15 minutes to reach the specific address.

The Interim Director Organisational Development expressed concern that this item had been included on the agenda. He did not feel that this was an appropriate forum for such a subject and commented that to seek a blanket dispensation

ACTION

might appear to be giving officers preferential treatment.

It was noted that the matter had been brought to the attention of the Director of Regulatory Services who was currently looking into the matter.

The Secretary to the Staff Side felt that the problem could be overcome by the issue of appropriate car badges to staff on Council business.

The Interim Director Organisation Development emphasised that he did not feel that this was an appropriate way for business to be brought before the LJP. He was informed by the Staff Side that the issue had arisen the previous Wednesday. The Interim Director Organisational Development commented that the matter could have been brought to his attention before this meeting, so that he could have attempted to resolve it with his colleagues in parking. He felt that it was inappropriate that issues involving individual officers, should be presented this way.

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

(B) the issue having been raised with relevant staff be noted.

16 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED - that next meeting of the LJP be held on 25 September, 2006 in the Waytemore Room, Bishop's Stortford at 2.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 2.45pm.

ACTION

Chairman
Date

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