

JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21st September 2010 at Worksop Town Hall

Present:

Employer's Representatives

Councillor J W Holland (Chairman)
Councillors D Challinor, Mrs S Isard and Miss M Stokes

Employee Representatives:

K Circuit, A McLoughlin, R Parr and J Rose

Officers in attendance: K Childs, L Dore, L Hull, J Rodriguez (for presentation only).

ACTION BY:

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Entwistle, G A N Oxyby and Mrs V Wanless.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

(b) Officers

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

15. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22nd JUNE 2010

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2010 be approved.

16. MINUTES FOR ACTION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action be received.

17. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be approved.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

18. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Corporate E-Induction

Members of the Joint Employee Council were shown various sections from the Council's nine module E-Induction programme. This enables staff to individually access information about the Council and its processes when they first join the organisation and has replaced the half-day corporate induction.

There are also currently thirty-five other e-learning courses available which can be accessed at work, home or via PC's in the Hawksmoor Suite. On completion of courses, employees receive an online certificate. It was noted that E-learning has proved to be a more cost effective and popular way to undertake training.

RESOLVED that the presentation be received.

(b) Review of Joint Employee Council Constitution

Members of the Joint Employee Council were invited to comment on relevant updated changes to the Constitution as agreed at Council on 12th July 2010. Details of the main changes and a copy of the revised element in the Constitution relating to the Joint Employee Council were appended to the report.

The Employees representatives raised concern that the term 'negotiate' had been replaced with 'consultation and expressed reservation on the new voting process.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be received.
2. Members of the Joint Employee Council familiarise themselves with the relevant changes to the Constitution

All

(c) The Equality Act 2010

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development informed the Joint Employee Council of the Equality Act 2010, most of which will be implemented on 1st October 2010 with the remainder following in April 2011. The Act brings together nine major equality laws and approximately one hundred others with intention of simplifying and harmonising them

The Council currently complies with existing legislation and it is not thought that major changes will be required to current policies, however, agreement was sought for the Head of Human Resources and the Branch Secretary of Unison to undertake to review the Council's policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the new Act.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Agreement be given for the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Branch Secretary of Unison to agree any changes to policy and procedures where this is confined to wording changes only, as detailed in Section 3.11.1 of the report, to ensure compliance by 1st October 2010.

HHRIBranch Secretary of Unison

3. Any of the Council's policies that require changes in wording to comply with the Equalities Act 2010 be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

HHR

(d) Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the draft Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy for consideration and agreement following consultation between the Employer and Employee Representatives.

A request to amend the policy had been proposed by the Employees Representatives which sought paid leave at the actual salary rate rather than statutory pay. However, the report raised concern regarding equality issues if paternity leave was paid at a greater rate than maternity leave. In addition, it was suggested that the terminology in Section 5 should read his/her, he/she given that the partner is not always male.

A copy of the draft policy was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. A bench-marking exercise with other authorities in the area be undertaken to compare parity between paternity and maternity policies regarding paid leave and the outcome be discussed between the Employer and the Employees representatives.

HHR/Branch Secretary of Unison

3. The Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy be recommended to Cabinet, subject to the amount of payment for leave being agreed between Employer and Employee Representatives.

HHR/Branch Secretary of Unison

(e) Apprenticeship Programme Information

The Joint Employee Council received a report which outlined the options available for supporting apprenticeship opportunities within the local community. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development reported that within the Council's 'People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan', the Council has outlined its aim to identify and introduce apprenticeship opportunities across all Service areas over the coming years. Initially, there will be a trial of two apprenticeships: one in Vehicle Maintenance and one in Ground Maintenance.

In response to queries, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development advised that: there would be no promise of a permanent job at the end of the apprenticeship but every effort would be made to find a one; the current rate of pay for an apprentice is £114.00 per week; no departmental mentor for each Service area had yet been defined; the scheme would be available to everyone and not just school-leavers.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

19. REPORT(S) OF UNISON, BASSETLAW LOCAL GOVERNMENT BRANCH

(a) Cycle to Work – Save Everyone Money!

The Branch Secretary of Unison presented a report which informed of a Government scheme that can save around half the cost of a bicycle and also save the Council money.

The scheme would enable the Council to loan bicycles and equipment to employees as part of their employment package. In return, each employee makes a 'salary sacrifice', (details were included in the report), with reduced tax and national insurance contributions while enjoying the benefit of cycling to work.

The Joint Employee council were informed that employees in both the NHS in Sheffield and Sheffield City Council are already benefiting from the scheme.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be received.
2. Further investigation be made into the prospect of the Council adopting the Government scheme to loan bicycles and cycling equipment to employees.

Branch Secretary of Unison

20. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agree that the following items of business involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4, and, therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda item 8(a) – Review of Agency Workers – Paragraph 4

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

21. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYERS REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Review of Agency Workers

Members were updated on the use of agency workers for the period 1st April 2010 to 30th June 2010.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development commented that the number of agency workers being used by the Council were now at an appropriate level and used only to cover for sickness, maternity leave and restructure purposes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other urgent business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting.