

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2004

Present: County Councillor Goodway (Chairperson);
County Councillors Cubitt, Neale, Salway and Thorne

E45 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

E46 : SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee in December 2002 had agreed a number of recommendations relating to issues surrounding recruitment and retention. The Committee was advised of the current position and the progress to date. The measures agreed by this Committee appeared to have resulted in an improvement in the effectiveness of Social Care Recruitment Campaigns.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the contents of the report and the progress that has been made in a number of key areas be noted;
- (2) Social Care and Health continue to review and develop recruitment and retention strategies and continue to monitor progress, particularly following completion of the social care restructuring process.

E47 : EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the public be excluded for the following items of business on the grounds that, if members of the public were present during the discussions, because of the nature of the business to be transacted, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(I) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as described below:

"1. Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office holder, former office holder or applicant to become an office holder under the Authority."

E48 : IMPLEMENTATION OF VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME

This Committee on 19 March, 2003 had approved the introduction of a Voluntary Severance Scheme. At meetings on 5 and 9 December, 2003 and 23 February, 2004 the Committee received proposals put forward by Service Areas for the development of their organisational structures, and on specific areas where voluntary severance would help facilitate the overall objectives of the restructuring. This Committee in December 2003 had agreed that as Service Area restructure proposals were implemented, further applications for voluntary severance would need to be considered, and it was agreed that any further applications received up to 1 April, 2004 would be reported to this Committee for approval. A summary of additional applications for voluntary severance supported by Service Areas, together with costs and benefits to the Service Area was submitted. Details of those applications not supported by Service Areas were also submitted.

The staff whose applications for severance had not been supported by their Chief Officer had been given the opportunity to appeal against the decision and details were submitted. The Committee was also advised that expressions of interest in voluntary severance had been received from three Chief Officers and two other officers. These supported applications had been included in the appendices; but it had not been possible to also include a five year cost/benefit analysis for these individuals as the timing of their proposed departures remained uncertain and, if agreed by the Committee, the precise dates would be at the Chief Executive's discretion. However, the proposals were within budget and it was recognised that this approach was conditional upon overall savings and cost benefits continuing to accrue. In order to ensure continued delivery of the Service and business objectives of the Council, these applications and agreement of timescales for the release of individual Chief Officers would be considered carefully. Members carefully considered the applications submitted.

3.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the recommendations contained in the appendices to the report in relation to the further phase of voluntary severance, be approved, which will enable Chief Officers to continue implementation of revised Service Area structures;
- (2) the voluntary severance applications from three Chief Officers, at mutually agreed dates in the next 12 months, which will allow the Chief Executive to implement revised organisational arrangements at Senior Management level within the Council, be approved.

E49 : IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL SCHEME

This Committee in December 2002 had approved, with an amendment to link incremental progression to satisfactorily achieving set objectives, a Staff Development Appraisal Scheme. The need to link individual performance to the needs of the organisation was considered to be paramount as performance appraisal played a fundamental role in individual performance and must be linked to corporate objectives.

In December 2002 this Committee had considered a report which had highlighted a range of issues to be addressed at senior management levels. To mirror the approach at PO grades and below, a proposal for career grades, linked to a successful Staff Development Appraisal process at OM1, OM2 and OM3 levels was considered. Career grades for OM's (1, 2 and 3) were proposed utilising additional spinal points, in order to respond to recruitment, retention and development needs. It was emphasised that these grades were not 'run through grades' as progression between spinal points would be subject to successfully achieving objectives set by Chief Officers as part of the annual Staff Development Appraisal process.

The proposed implementation of the scheme for OMs and linkages to the Corporate Plan was outlined in an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the implementation of the Council's Staff Development Appraisal Scheme to the OM Group, as outlined in Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (2) a report outlining progress to date on Building for the Future initiatives be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

E50 : SERVICE AREA RESTRUCTURING PROPOSALS

This Committee on 23 February, 2004 had received an update on the restructuring proposals for each service area, together with details of progress. The Committee had noted the report but had asked for more detailed information to be provided in respect of Waste Management, and Leisure & Lifelong Learning.

In the case of Leisure & Lifelong Learning, the service area had proceeded to remodel its structure in response to VSS request.

In the case of Waste Management, following the appointment of the Chief Officer in November, 2003, the Waste Management Officer had reviewed plans and developed organisational structures in the short and medium term. The Committee was advised of the performance standards set by the Government. As a result it had been necessary to establish new posts and to re-grade existing posts within the new Waste Management service area to ensure that the objectives were met, and to take full advantage of the Welsh Assembly grant funding whilst it was available.

The Welsh Assembly Government funding and grants for specific waste management initiatives had recently been confirmed to March, 2007. Implementation of the new organisational structure would allow recycling and composting initiatives to be progressed with the advantage of WAG grant funding, and provide the capacity for development of partnerships. Discussions on the organisational structure, and two posts in particular, were ongoing with trade unions.

5.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) progress made in the establishment of a new organisational structure for the Waste Management Service Area, and that specific issues raised in respect of two particular posts within the structure which will be subject to further review and discussion prior to implementation, be noted;
- (2) a further report on the Waste Management Service Area be submitted to this Committee in three months' time;
- (3) the Deputy Leader (Environment) be asked to indicate how it is proposed to maintain cleaner streets in the suburbs;
- (4) the current position in relation to the restructuring of Leisure & Lifelong Learning be noted;
- (5) a report addressing low-pay issues be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.