

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS COMMITTEE

31 JULY 2007

Present: County Councillor Stephens (Chairperson);
County Councillors Berman, Derbyshire, Jones, Sheppard,
Walker and Walsh

Apology: County Councillor Salway

8 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

9 : CHIEF HIGHWAYS & WASTE MANAGEMENT OFFICER

The Chief Human Resources Officer provided an update on the appointment of this Chief Officer post and confirmed that members of this Committee would be informed of any developments.

10 : EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS COMMITTEE – FUTURE ROLE

The Constitution Committee on 6 July had resolved to recommend to Council that the terms of reference of this Committee be as follows:

- (a) To consider and determine policy and issues arising from the organisation, terms and conditions of individual employees at Chief Officer level and above (together with any other category of employee specified in Regulation from time to time) where this is necessary.
- (b) To decide requests for re-grading of posts at Chief Officer level and above (together with any other category of employee specified in Regulation from time to time) whether by way of appeal by an employee against a decision to refuse a re-grading application or to decide applications for re-grading which are supported.

As indicated previously the need to change the terms of reference had arisen following the introduction of new Regulations namely the Local Authority Executive Arrangements (Functions and Responsibilities)

(Wales) Regulations 2007. Under the previous Regulations this Committee had authority to consider and determine policy and issues for all Council staff. Members had previously expressed their concern over the limitations imposed on this Committee and the fact that Trade Union representatives would no longer be able to express their comments to a political cross section of Members of this Committee. The Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer reported that she had written to the Wales Assembly Government expressing these concerns and was awaiting the outcome to see if they would be prepared to reinstate the original terms of reference.

The Chairperson indicated that the Committee would have wished to have continued with its original terms of reference but that the changes were necessitated by legislation. It was likely that the Trade Union representatives would be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Business meeting as appropriate.

The Committee suggested that the Chairperson should also write to the Wales Assembly Government and trade union representations were also invited.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the changes required to the terms of reference of this Committee be noted;
- (2) the decision of the Constitution Committee on 6 July to be reported to Council in September be noted;
- (3) the Chair write to the Minister to express the Committee's concerns at the change in the role of this Committee as a result of legal requirements imposed by the Wales Assembly Government.

11 : 'PROUD – OUR PEOPLE AWARDS'

The Committee received an update and feedback on the 2007 "Proud – Our People Awards".

The revised and agreed Awards Structure had been developed to reinforce a number of corporate themes. The awards for this year had been open to

both individual and team nominations. The four award categories included:

- (a) Excellence in Service Delivery
- (b) Outstanding Contribution to the Community
- (c) Change and Innovation
- (d) Outstanding Achiever of the Year 2007-08-10

In response to feedback from last year, the criteria for award submissions was much clearer and more precise for 2007 which made the decision making process more objective and fairer. Panels were also established to judge each category with representatives from Senior Management, Trade Unions and Members.

Some 300 guests attended the Award Ceremony with speeches from Sir Terry Matthews (Mitel) and Simon Weston. The Committee congratulated all contributors and offered comments on improving the Awards Programme for next year. It was important that all employees be included and that a mechanism be introduced whereby nominations are considered through means other than simply through a written submission. The Chief Human Resources Officer agreed to explore this possibility.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the feedback from the 2nd ‘Proud – Our People Award’ event be noted;
- (2) the event continues to be developed and be held again in March 2008 as outlined in Appendix C to the report.

12 : PANDEMIC INFLUENZA – HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS: UPDATE

On 15 January 2007 this Committee had received a report which highlighted the issues that needed to be addressed to ensure a planned and co-ordinated response to the pandemic and to ensure that the Council could maintain its essential services and, in turn, its responsibilities to the

people of Cardiff.

The Committee received a further report which updated the issues and concerns being fed back to the internal Pandemic Planning Group from all Service Areas.

If an influenza pandemic occurred, the Council would need to maintain essential services and play a role, in partnership with external agencies, in managing the pandemic. An Action Plan had been produced by the Internal Pandemic Planning Group highlighting the work that needed to be done by all Service Areas. A great deal of the work preparing for a pandemic was business continuity work. Service Areas had been asked to identify essential and non-essential services by October. This would enable the movement of employees from one Service Area to another to ensure the continuation of essential services.

A qualification and skills database would be needed to allow managers access to the information they would need to ensure the correct staff were brought in to continue to provide the level of service required. The database would need to list the qualifications, skills, checks and life skills of a person. The full capabilities of the SAP system would need to be explored to ascertain whether this database could be set up and also a procedure for the collection of such data for the database would need to be produced.

During a major incident the command and control structure was clearly defined with the Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team. As members of this Group could well be affected by the infection it was thought that wide ranging powers would need to be given to Operational Managers and other Managers to make decisions in a crisis management situation.

Further investigation into home working for those employees identified as being essential was needed. Also the need for a holding contract with a company for the purchase of personal protective equipment to staff who were shown by risk assessment to be at risk of exposure should be assessed and actioned.

If the need arose to ration fuel then the Council would need to prioritise those Officers and functions that would have greatest demand on this resource.

The full impact of the pandemic would not be known until it had struck, so other issues could arise that would need instant decisions under crisis management conditions. The financial impact on the Council would be significant and a recovery plan would be needed to ensure a thorough return to normality.

It was proposed that:

- the capability of the SAP system is explored to enable the collation of a Council-wide skills and qualification database;
- the possibility of a holding contract is explored with a company to supply the required personal protection equipment identified as being necessary for the protection of frontline staff identified as being at risk.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the work that has been undertaken to date in reviewing the implications of an influenza pandemic be noted;
- (2) an update be submitted to a future Executive Business Meeting.

13 : NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this Committee would be held on a date to be arranged in September 2007.