

JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

30 October 2003
(4.30-5.05pm)

PRESENT: Councillors: Smart (Chair), Adigun-Harris, Bradnack, Dryden, Stebbings, Maggie Hendrick (Unison), Richard O'Leary (GMB).

Chief Executive, Head of Human Resources, Director of City Services.

1. MINUTES – 4 June 2003

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were none.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor White, Councillor Taylor, Executive Councillor (Commercial & Human Resources) and Councillor Nimmo-Smith, the Leader deputising for Councillor Taylor.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared personal interests: Councillor Smart as a member of ATL, Councillor Dryden as a member of Amicus (and his wife as a member of Unison) and Councillor Bradnack as a member of NUT.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

6. RECRUITMENT AND WORKFORCE MONITORING ACTION PLAN FOR REPORTING IN 2003/4

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report. The Human Resources Strategy was still at an early stage; the first draft was due in March 2004. The key areas it was likely to focus on would become the key areas for which performance indicators would be developed. These would be brought for detailed consideration at future meetings of the Forum. In the meantime action plans were in place to address the issues raised by the review at the meeting in the summer. She highlighted the following aspects:

Section	Comments
4.4 Monitoring information required under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000	The newly formed Equalities Panel would also have a role in monitoring this.
4.6 Workforce monitoring	Workforce information will be compared

	with the 2001 census data for Cambridge and the surrounding area. The new Human Resources/payroll system would also facilitate the collection of information.
4.7 New anti discrimination legislation coming into force in December 2003	The Council will not be monitoring the workforce in respect of sexual orientation as there was a risk that this would be seen as intrusive.

The Chair invited the union representatives to make their comments on the report.

Richard O'Leary (GMB) welcomed the report as positive and providing links to the Single Status implementation. He referred to a recent ACAS paper on pay and the Head of Human Resources acknowledged it would be useful and its implications could be considered at a future meeting of the Forum.

Councillor Bradnack asked whether the 2001 census data was complete yet and when members would receive the information. He also asked that targets described as "on-going" eventually had a completion date.

The Head of Human Resources replied that the proportion for ethnic origin was higher in the census data than in the workforce. This was partly due to the number of overseas students in Cambridge. However, the monitoring had not shown any bias in either gender or race and monitoring would continue to ensure there was no indirect discrimination in the future.

Councillor Bradnack asked that it be clear to members what from the Action Plan was to be reported back to members and when.

The Forum agreed unanimously the recommendations in the officer's report.

7. ORAL UPDATE ON SINGLE STATUS

The Chair congratulated the negotiating team on a successful outcome to the ballot. The Chief Executive acknowledged the efforts of everyone involved especially the Head of Human Resources, the Director of City Services and the unions. It had been a significant piece of joint work.

The Head of Human Resources highlighted key points of the process to date and the work still to be completed:

- The official agreement would be signed on 7 November 2003
- 600 staff had attended the briefings
- 800 staff had been sent ballot papers of which 537 had been returned with 393 in favour, 144 against and 2 spoiled papers.
- 70% of staff would be on the same level of pay, 10% on a lower level and 20% on a higher level.
- Changes to the travel allowance scheme would have had to be made even if there had not been the single status implementation. This affected 250 staff and there were generous protection packages in place.

Richard O'Leary (GMB) affirmed that the outcome was positive and that this had been the result of good joint working.

Councillor Dryden asked whether the 10% of staff on lower salaries were protected. The Head of Human Resources explained that there was protection for 3 years for the current postholder.

The Head of Human Resources said that the next critical date was the 1 December when staff would receive their individual letters. By the 12 December it would be known how many staff intended to appeal against their grading. Provision had been made for 120 appeals over the 10-week appeals period.

Councillor Dryden asked if there were budget implications if there were successful appeals. The Head of Human Resources said that the budget had been set for the worst case scenario and for the work still to be completed concerning those on non-standard work patterns.

Councillor Stebbings asked if the Council was likely to lose any staff as a result of the Single Status agreement. The Head of Human Resources and both union representatives acknowledged there might be a few people who applied for other jobs.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed - Tuesday 6 April at 4.30pm.

The meeting ended at 5.05 p.m.

Chair