

JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

PRESENT: Councillors: Taylor (Chair), C Rosenstiel, Smart and Dryden.
Liz Brennan (Unison), Kevin Roberts (GMB).
Executive Councillor Jennifer Liddle.

Chief Executive, Head of Human Resources, Human Resources Manager, Head of Customer Support, City Services, Director of City Services.

1. MINUTES – 10 January 2006

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

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Adigun-Harris.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared personal interests:
Councillor Smart as a member of ATL
Councillors Dryden and C. Rosenstiel as members of the Amicus

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICE PLAN 2006/07

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Forum.

She envisaged the main issues as follow:

- No savings for staff in HR but savings from the general staff budget, such as staff training and childcare subsidies.
- The securing of a bid to recruit a Human Resources Diversity Adviser next April 2006. The permanent appointment of this officer is key to implementing the diversity work program.
- Some improvements to best value performance indicators have been achieved in relation to black minority ethnic staff number, but this is still an issue.
- Customer Access and organisational development will be critical work streams for 2006/7.

7 DIVERSITY UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Forum.

The Head of Human Resources made the following points:

- Good progress had been made in the last 6 months but there was still significant work to do.
- The Diversity Action Plan was considerable.
- Joint work via the Diversity Working Group was important to making good progress on diversity.

Liz Brennan, Unison Representative, was pleased with the joint stewards' workshops and found them very helpful. The same opinion was expressed by Kevin Roberts, GMB representative, who also congratulated Cambridge City Council for being ahead of other authorities, as had been recognised by external awards.

8 AGE DISCRIMINATION

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Forum.

The Head of Human Resources advised that the age legislation will come into force next October 2006 and more awareness was necessary from managers, as in countries like Ireland and USA, where the legislation is in place, claims in tribunals have risen by 40%.

Liz Brennan, Unison Representative, commented that this would affect not only prospective employees, but also working partners, recruitment agencies and so on.

Councillor Dryden pointed out that there are just 9 employees over 65 working for the Council. The Head of Human Resources will check the insurance details position and confirm this to Councillor Dryden and the JSEF chair.

9 WORKFORCE

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Forum. She was thanked for the figures.

10 UPDATE ON PENSION SCHEME CHANGES

The Head of Human Resources introduced the report to the Forum.

The Head of Human Resources made the following points:

- Local Government shares responsibility on this issue with trade unions.
- The regulations are still not finalised.
- The local trade unions have confirmed that they will be using the consultation period to 28th February to lobby for support not to abolish the 85-year rule.

Richard O'Leary, GMB, expressed the following concerns:

- Misinformation about the scheme as national employment was Tory-controlled.
- The need to be clear about the 85-year rule.
- The importance of ensuring that the information given to members was accurate.

Liz Brennan, Unison Representative, advised that the Trade Union campaign was on both a national and local level.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 21st March 2006 at 5.00pm.

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The meeting ended at 5.55 p.m.

Chair