

JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

PRESENT: Councillors: Bick (Vice Chair), Ward, Dryden, Rosenstiel, Shah, Smart (Chair),
Liz Brennan (Unison), Kevin Roberts (GMB)
Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources
Toni Ainley, Director of City Services
Vicki Davidson, Organisational Development Manager
Chris Fagan, Pay and Reward Manager

1. MINUTES – 28 August 2007

The minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources, Rod Cantrill and Councillor Bradnack.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared personal interests:
Councillors Rosenstiel and Dryden as members of Unite (formerly Amicus)
Councillor Smart as a member of ATL.
Councillor Shah as a member of UCU (University Colleges Union)

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. MILEAGE ALLOWANCES

The Committee noted the plan and agreed that the current rates are reasonable. Kevin Roberts (GMB), suggested that this item be kept under review in view of the rising cost of fuel. Liz Brennan (Unison), agreed with this view and suggested that at an NJC level, and interim formula was under discussion to address rising costs. Fuel costs are also a major component of the ongoing pay negotiations. Cllr. Dryden asked if a similar system to the one used at Addenbrooke's Hospital to provide a discount for staff that used public transport had been considered. This is being investigated. However, the mileage issue is a separate matter as it relates to staff using their own cars for work related activities. The Committee questioned how useful it is to pay a mileage level above the tax threshold. Members asked for clarification of casual and essential users and how this was linked to employment contracts. The Head of Human Resources said that these

were under review. However, they were reviewed in 2004 and it is unlikely that there will be major changes.

It was agreed that the tax effectiveness of the mileage allowances and of subsidies for public transport need further investigation.

7. EVALUATION OF PROCESSES TO RECRUIT INTERNAL STAFF TO THE CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Vicki Davidson, Organisational Development Manager introduced the report. Overall it was felt the recruitment process had been well planned and successful. The use of an external partner was particularly effective. Lessons have been learnt from the process including the need for increased awareness of additional needs of part-time workers. Briefings need to be flexible to avoid them feeling excluded from the process.

Kevin Roberts (GMB) raised a few concerns. Some departments had had little or no applications from staff for the new posts. Liz Brennan (Unison) was concerned that 28 individuals from the original ring fenced list of staff who were given priority to apply for the new jobs did not apply for posts. Some expressed reservations about the process or were put off by changes to conditions and lack of clarity about the new posts. It was considered that Parking Services felt apprehensive due to the uncertainty of the future of the LAPE agreement with the County council. A decision on this is likely in the near future.

Members asked for clarification on the selection process and why respondents to the questionnaire did not feel previous experience was taken into account. All applicants went through a selection process involving tests and interviews. Previous experience alone was not a consideration but should have aided applicants through the process.

Members asked what the future holds for the 24 individuals in the redeployment pool. Restructuring of the back office provision is on-going as tasks are moved over to the Customer Service Centre, and the unions are involved in the process. Some redundancies may result It is hoped these can be kept to a minimum.

Support and training is being provided for staff facing re-organisation.

The evaluation had produced some surprises with staff not understanding that the role of Human Resources Team was to assist managers with the process rather than coach individual staff members.

The process was agreed to have been more successful than comparable authorities. For example Watford made far fewer appointments from existing staff when they went through a similar exercise.

8 2008/09 PAY AWARD

Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources, recapped on the progress so far. The initial offer had been accepted by GBM but rejected by Unison. Strike action had followed. This has now been suspended while negotiations continue. The new national negotiations have a wider remit and include terms and conditions; mileage allowances may also be included.

Further information from these negotiation is expected in the next few week. GMB may have to ballot members again when details of any new offer are announced. Unison are awaiting the national negotiation outcomes before commenting.

The meeting ended at 5.47p.m.

Chair