

Local Joint Consultative Panel

A meeting of Local Joint Consultative Panel was held on Tuesday, 18th December, 2007.

Present: Cllr Jim Beall (Chairman), Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Terry Laing, Cllr Roy Rix; J Stockill, S Batchelor, J Brookes (vice S Smith) (UNISON); A Christon (GMB)

Officers: D MacDonald, J Spittle (RES); J McCann, R Bradley (DNS); S Johnson (LD)

Also in attendance: No other persons in attendance

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Ross Patterson; D Kitching (TGWU), J Cosgrove (UCAAT), S Smith (UNISON), P Weston (AMICUS)(UCAAT)

LJC 15/07 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Eddy declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the item entitled Agency, Casual, Sub-Contract Workers within Stockton Borough Council due to knowing an employee in Grounds Maintenance.

Councillor Beall declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item entitled Single Status Update as his wife was employed by Stockton Council.

LJC 16/07 **Minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2007**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

LJC 17/07 **Agency, Casual, Sub-Contract Workers within Stockton Borough Council**

The Head of Direct Services and the Care for Your Area Service Manager were in attendance at the meeting and presented the Panel with information relating to agency workers.

The Panel raised concerns about the number of agency workers employed for over 12 months. It was advised that the nature of the industry meant that agency workers were often employed to supplement contract work and that without this flexibility, redundancy would be an issue. It was also noted that funding was an issue as it may only last for a few years.

Questions were raised as to whether the core workforce could be increased and the Head of Direct Services advised that the provision for additional full time staff was not part of the budget for the service. It was advised that agency workers were given the opportunity to apply for any full time posts that became available within the service. The Head of Direct Services also advised the Panel that they struggled to recruit enough full time members of staff in the Heating, Ventilation and Electrical Engineers department as they could not compete with external organisations.

The Panel requested that the Head of Direct Services and the Care for Your Area Service Manager attend the next meeting and provide the Panel with further information in relation to agency workers, specifically the length of time they were employed in the service and the number of agency workers that had

become permanent members of staff.

The Acting Health and Safety Manager circulated information relating to the induction of agency workers at Stockton Council. It was advised that all Heads of Service had been contacted to establish what procedures were in place to induct temporary agency workers into the workplace and the responses received were presented to Members.

Councillor Coleman enquired why new teachers were not included in the Service induction feedback comments. The Head of Human Resources advised that schools were represented by two separate local joint consultative panels, one for teaching, and one for non-teaching staff.

CONCLUDED that the Head of Direct Services and the Care for Your Area Service Manager attend the next meeting and provide the Panel with further information in relation to agency workers, as detailed above.

**LJC
18/07** **Health and Safety Statistics**

The Panel were provided with Accident and Assault statistics which had been reported to the Health and Safety Unit for the period 1st October to 10th December 2007. Details of the Health and Safety Training Courses were provided for the same period.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

**LJC
19/07** **Single Status Update**

The Head of Human Resources provided an update on Single Status.

It was advised that letters had gone out to all employees at the end of October 2007. Roadshows had also been held with representatives from HR and Trade Unions in attendance. The Trade Union Ballot had returned a 2:1 yes vote in favour of the proposal. It was advised that after the collective agreement had been signed off nationally by the Trade Unions, the detailed work for the implementation of Single Status would begin.

It was expected that detailed letters would go out to all employees by the end of January 2008.

It was also advised that the Equal Pay settlement had been further rolled out for those that had expired in April 2006. Roadshows had also been held.

The Panel requested further information in relation to the types of job/grades that lost out and gained as a result of Single Status. The Head of Human Resources agreed to re-circulate the information originally provided for Elected Members of the Council.

CONCLUDED that the Head of Human Resources circulate information on Single Status, as detailed above.

**LJC
20/07** **Minutes of the Trade Union Liaison Group**

The Head of Human Resources presented a report that sought approval for the minutes of the Trade Union Liaison Group to be included as a standing item for the Local Joint Consultative Panel.

It was explained that until recently, representatives from Unison, GMB and Unite attended the Human Resources Strategy Group (HRSG). The purpose of HRSG was to provide service level input into HR policies and other issues. Although discussions on draft policies took place at HRSG, this was usually at the point when documents were nearing completion. It was considered that the Trade Unions did not therefore have an opportunity to help form policies and influence outcomes.

It was advised that because of this, informal arrangements were set up to enable such discussions to take place. However, this had not been particularly successful and had led to duplication and sometimes confusion as to whether proper consultative arrangements had taken place.

The Head of Human Resources advised that it had been agreed with the Trade Unions that they would cease to attend HRSG and that the current informal arrangements would be formalised by the creation of a Trade Union Liaison Group.

The Panel were provided with a copy of the Terms of Reference for the Trade Union Liaison Group.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the Trade Union Liaison Group be considered and noted by the Local Joint Consultative Panel.