

## Local Joint Consultative Panel

A meeting of Local Joint Consultative Panel was held on Monday, 21st March, 2011.

**Present:** J Asquith (UNITE)(Chair), Cllr Terry Laing(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr David Coleman, Cllr Mick Eddy, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Roy Rix, Mrs C Burns (UNISON), A Woodmass (UNISON), J Stockill (UNISON)

**Officers:** D MacDonald, Mrs J Spittle (R); Mrs T Harrison (LD)

**Also in attendance:** No other persons were present

**Apologies:** There were no apologies for absence

### **LJC 23/10**      **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Rix declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to the item entitled 'Current Staffing Situation Update' due to the fact that his partner was employed by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

### **LJC 24/10**      **Minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2010**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting be agreed as a correct record.

### **LJC 25/10**      **Health and Safety Report**

The Panel were provided with accident and assault statistics reported to Health and Safety via the formal notification procedure from 1st December 2010 - 28th February 2011, including any notification of incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

The Panel were advised that the Silver Level Better Health at work Award had been presented to the Council on the 10th February. The award was given in recognition of workplaces that actively promoted improved workplace health.

Clarification of the meaning of an assault was provided, as being, 'any behaviour where an employee is threatened or otherwise harmed by physical, verbal, sexual, racial or other means of abuse'.

It was observed that figures reported for physical assaults (25x) were partially due to the figures incorporating incidents occurring within schools and special schools.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

### **LJC 26/10**      **Current Staffing Situation Update**

The Panel received an update report on the current staffing situation. Following the completion of the second year of the three year Efficiency; Improvement and Transformation Reviews the Panel were advised on the number of employees who had taken voluntary redundancies and whose jobs would not be filled.

Of the reviews which were drawing to a close, the reduction in staff had been achieved through the deletion of vacant posts, seeking out volunteers for redundancy or early retirement, seeking volunteers for reduction in hours and making changes to working arrangements. It was hoped that such arrangements would keep the number of compulsory redundancies to a minimum.

Discussion took place as to how many staff would be affected and who would continue to provide the required services. The Panel were advised that information on the final number of staff affected would not be known until much further into year three of the EIT reviews. Information on the provision of services was discussed as part of each EIT review.

The Panel observed that the review of school catering had been carried out very well with full and effective consultation with staff and unions and had resulted in huge savings but no compulsory redundancies.

It was also reported that unions had been involved with the administration review from the start.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

**LJC  
27/10**

#### **Agency Workers Update**

The Panel were provided with an update on the figures on agency workers following the Panels request to have quarterly updates on the agenda to identify trends.

The Panel queried whether the figures included the agency seasonal workers; however the officer advised that they would be available in the next quarter of figures.

The Panel noted that there were still nine agency workers in Xentrall and queried the reason for this. The Officer advised that they were covering temporary sickness and vacant posts pending an EIT review of Xentrall which would reduce the number of permanent staff.

Discussion took place regarding the actual level of sickness per employee within the Council compared to the reported figures. The Panel were advised that the Council were averaging around 8 days per person a year but the press had quoted 12 days per employee. The press had been informed of the error.

Following the Panels concerns the officer advised that agency workers would be let go before redundancies to contracted employees.

Officers advised that previous, hard to fill jobs such as social workers were now being taken by permanent staff which reduced the need for agency workers within Children, Education and Social Care.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

**LJC**

#### **Trade Union Liaison Group Minutes - 18th January 2011**

**28/10**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Trade Union Liaison Group and Human Resources of 18th January 2011.

Discussion took place regarding the no smoking item in the minutes. Clarification was given that Council employees were not to smoke in their cars during work time. However it was noted that this was very difficult to enforce.

Clarification was received regarding the overtime payments item, the Panel were advised that overtime would still be paid but consideration was being made to do away with time and a half.

Members were reminded that the Trade Union Liaison Group minutes were on the agenda for Local Joint Consultative Panel for information only.

CONCLUDED that the minutes be noted.