

JOINT STAFF COMMITTEE

Wednesday 22 May 2002

PRESENT:-

EMPLOYER'S SIDE – Councillors BOWKER, Mrs HEALY (Deputy Chairman), and THOMPSON.

STAFF SIDE – Mrs J BLACKWELL, Mr P COCKS, Mr R CROWHURST and Mrs P SHEARER.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: - Mr M RAY (Chief Executive), Mrs S McHUGH (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Mrs D BAGLEY (Head of Sports, Recreation and Leisure), Mrs C FREEMAN (Acting Head of Personnel) and Ms A ROBINS (Employee Relations Adviser).

(Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Marsden, Skilton and Williams, Mr N Fuller, Mr R Cussons, Mrs L Sargent and Mrs C Patterson-Snell).

- 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.** Mrs L Sargent was elected Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.
- 2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN.** Councillor Mrs Healy was elected Deputy Chairman for the ensuing municipal year. Councillor Mrs Healy took the opportunity to assure the Staff Side that effective communication and consultation with Staff in the decision making process remained important and would continue.
- 3. MINUTES.** The minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2002 were submitted and approved and the Deputy Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.
- 4. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE – UPDATE.** The Chief Executive reported that the Council had received confirmation on 21 May 2002 that the Investors in People Award had been achieved. This followed the two periods of assessment and interviews with 78 people to provide evidence against national standards of training and development. The report from the assessor had paid particular tribute to the Council for achieving this Award across all departments and recognised the excellent work done by managers and staff in meeting the standards. The Award lasted for three years and the Council would be re-assessed against the standards within that period. A press launch involving representatives from the Skills and Learning Council, Members and Officers was in the process of being arranged. A copy of the final assessment report would be available on the Intranet. Members thanked all the participants and expressed particular thanks to Margaret Whitehead, Staff Development Manager for her work in co-ordinating the process.

The Staff Side regarded the achievement as a very positive step and was pleased to have been involved in the process.

NOTED.

- 5. BEST VALUE REVIEW OF LEISURE SERVICES.** The Staff Side and the Committee considered the report of the Head of Sports, Recreation and Leisure regarding the outcome of the Best Value Review of Leisure Services.

The Staff Side reported on the importance of keeping staff apprised of progress regarding implementation of the improvement plan. It was highlighted that UNISON members at the Sovereign Centre without access to computers had difficulty in obtaining the information available. The Staff Side wished to play an active role and be positive regarding the changes required as part of the review. It was reported that Mary Laxton would be acting on behalf of the Branch in future consultations and negotiations.

Mrs Bagley stated that UNISON would continue to be involved in the process and that steps would be taken to ensure the effective communication of information.

NOTED.

6. PAY NEGOTIATIONS. The Acting Head of Personnel reported that the Trade Unions had submitted a claim for £1750 or 6%. The Employers side of the NJC had made a final offer of 3% in March. The Trade Unions having rejected that offer will now be balloting for strike action from 10 June to 5 July.

Mrs Freeman reported that in view of the Council's finite resources, any increase over and above the 3% costed for within the budget could have an adverse effect on the delivery of Council services. With the current level of inflation running at 1.3% and national settlements averaging 2.5%, the Council felt that 3% constituted a good deal.

The Staff Side indicated the importance of raising the wage levels of the lowest paid workers but said that they would await the outcome of the ballot.

NOTED

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY ITEMS. – Electrical Safety – Redoubt. The Staff Side reported that urgent works had now been completed but that additional funds would need to be identified for works required in the long term. It was requested that a copy of the electrical survey be forwarded to UNISON.

NOTED.

8. FUTURE MEETINGS. The dates for the Municipal Year 2002/2003 were noted as follows:

17 July; 11 September; 20 November 2002; 15 January; 19 March and 21 May 2003 all on Wednesdays commencing at 2.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm

Mrs B Healy

Deputy Chairman

(in the Chair)

kc/joint staff(02.05.22mins)