

## **JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2012**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Attending:**

**Councillors:**

McLean, Sutton (Chairman), Whitman and Wood.

**Trade Union:** Maggie Harvey, William O’Gorman and Christopher Plested.

**Officers:** Matt Rawdon, Human Resources Team Leader and Pat Duff, Member Support Officer (Minutes)

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Harden, W Cherry and J Colyer.

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2012 were agreed by the members present and were signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

The date on the minutes to be changed from Monday 12 March 2012 to Monday 21 May 2012.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

The Human Resources Team Leader agreed to send a Health and Safety update to members of JNC.

**5. CAR USERS ALLOWANCE**

The Human Resources Team Leader summarised the report and gave the background on the current situation.

The options discussed at JNC were taken to the Assistant Directors Group in May. Their view was to look at criteria that may apply for staff to be entitled to a car user allowance and to look at possibly removing the mileage threshold. This would support the environment sustainability agenda and it would appear to make the allowance fairer to staff who had raised concerns.

The revised criteria was taken back to the Assistant Directors Group in July to consider the financial aspect. After a debate the view was that the criteria and taking out the mileage may have a significant financial impact on the Council. It was perceived that the staffing bill, in terms of mileage, would increase with that criteria. The advice from

the Assistant Directors Group was that the scheme had to be cost neutral and, with the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the cost neutral element became more important to the Group who wanted to have a fair policy with due consideration to cost.

It was disappointing that no further progress had been made with a cost neutral scheme, but it appeared to be a difficult task. However, there were now two options:

1. To leave the policy as it is.
2. Management to sit down with recognised trade unions of the Council to see what other cost neutral options there were. It was hoped that the trade unions could help by presenting effective car user policies that other Local Authorities used, maybe with assistance from the regional office.

Councillor Whitman said that at the last meeting Councillor Rance had pointed out that any allowance over 45p would be taxed.

The Human Resources Team Leader confirmed that anything above the HMRC rate of 45p was taxed at 20%.

Councillor McLean asked the context of cost neutral.

Councillor Wood arrived at 6.40 pm.

The Human Resources Team Leader said that if the mileage threshold was reduced to 500 miles per year rather than 1000, the new scheme would cost approximately £30k.

W O’Gorman suggested sitting down and seeing what the unions wanted to do about it.

M Harvey said at the last meeting, J Colyer had given a figure of £16k and asked if the cost neutral aspect was for this financial year only.

The Senior Human Resources Officer said that at the last meeting, four options were considered. The trade union option cost £16.5k.

M Harvey said she had done 800 miles last year and she would have made this up to 1,000 miles if she could have done. It was very unfair to take this allowance away. Staff could not do the job without a car which had to be maintained, taxed and insured. Some people had been given bigger areas so that they could easily do 1,000 miles per year but others just could not achieve that and shorter journeys meant more wear and tear on the car. These staff could not get lease cars or car loans.

Councillor Sutton sympathised with the problem but unfortunately, as far as the budget was concerned during this financial year, the Council would have to keep the current scheme. This would come up for review in the pre budget discussions but it was not feasible that there would be a lot of change in any policies. Many commercial companies were finding that changing car allowances was a way to cut costs and the Council had to look at this as well.

There was always going to be criticism of the scheme and Councillor Sutton suggested leaving it to the officers to negotiate with unions. The Council did not want to spoil the efficiency and good will of the staff. If the Council kept the scheme, the £16.5k would

have to be taken from somewhere else. The committee would keep it monitored and would do whatever it could.

The Human Resources Team Leader said it was important to arrange further time to consider it. Obviously staff were not happy with this approach and the Council needed to listen to concerns raised. The Green Fleet Group had received a presentation on pool cars recently and this was being looked at practically and financially.

C Plested suggested looking at pool cars for people with lower mileage.

Councillor Sutton suggested this topic be left for this financial year but it was a work in progress for the future.

### **Action**

The Human Resources Team Leader to meet with the trade unions to consider this further.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The following items to be considered at the next meeting:

1. Christmas pay slips. Last Christmas there had been problems with some staff's money on the Friday before Christmas. (MR).
2. The Probation Procedure. This was currently being reviewed. (MR).
3. The Sickness Procedure – Trade Union Issues. (WO'G/MR).

### **Action**

1. The Senior Human Resources Officer to provide an update on Christmas pay slips prior to the next meeting in December. **MR**
2. W O'Gorman to provide Matt Rawdon with the issues regarding the Sickness Procedure before 12 November to enable these to be answered. **WO'G**

## **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

<b>Meeting Date – start time 6.30 pm</b>	<b>Date agenda to be circulated</b>
Monday 3 December 2012	Monday 12 November 2012
Monday 4 March 2013	Monday 11 February 2013

This was agreed and noted.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm.