



Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Consultative Panel held at the
on 20 September 2007

Present:

Councillors Peach, Collins, Gilbert, Lamb, Ridgway and Swift
Trade Union Representatives: Pat Alford, Chris Gold, Derek Jones, Roxanne Talbot

Officers:

Karen Craig, Senior HR Consultant (Policy)
Jacquie McGeachie, Interim Head of HR
Richard Johnson, Business Transformation
Margaret Welton, Principal Lawyer
Carol Tilley, Democratic Services

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Croft, Councillor Hussain, and John Nolan.

2. Minutes of Joint Consultative Panel held on 25 October 2005.

The Panel **AGREED** as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2005.

The Panel was reminded that the JCP meeting was a forum for discussion and negotiation, rather than a decision making body. It was agreed that the order of proceedings would take the form of a presentation of the draft car allowance policy from officers, followed by a presentation from the Union representatives outlining their position in respect of the proposals. It was noted that Pat Alford (Unison) would present the case on behalf of all union colleagues. It was further agreed to grant a brief recess of the meeting upon request from either party, should an opportunity for private discussion with colleagues be deemed necessary.

3. Car Allowances - Draft Policy

The Panel received an outline of the proposed policy, which had failed to receive agreement from the Unions at the Joint Consultative Forum held 13 September 2007. Panel members were advised that the new policy sought to remove the distinction between casual and essential users by providing reimbursement for business mileage actually undertaken in cases where employees used their own vehicle for business purposes based on Inland Revenue rates. Proposed reimbursement rates would be in accordance with Inland Revenue rules. The policy further sought to support the Council's Travel Plan by encouraging employees to consider the most efficient, cost effective and appropriate means of transport when planning business journeys, whilst taking into account the effect on the environment.

The Trade Union representative responded emphasising the Unions' view that there were some anomalies within the current scheme and their wish to work towards the introduction of arrangements that were more equitable. Furthermore, there was no objection in respect of the proposal to move towards one mileage rate for all vehicles. However, for the Trade Unions, the issue of employees currently designated as essential users (and therefore in their opinion, subject to a contractual obligation to provide a suitably insured vehicle for business use) was of concern. The Panel was asked to consider how the proposed policy would take account of this, should staff affected no longer choose to make their vehicles available for essential Council business.

The Trade Union representative raised a further concern in respect of potential changes to staff car parking arrangements. The Leader responded in terms that currently it was by no means certain that car parking arrangements would be reviewed.

It was noted that employees in receipt of an essential car user allowance were required to take out additional vehicle insurance cover for business use. A discussion was held with regard to the differential between the cost of private/personal insurance and insurance which included cover for business purposes. The Panel further discussed the possibility of opportunities for entering into procurement arrangements with a car hire company.

It was agreed that a brief adjournment would allow both parties an opportunity for private discussion with colleagues. The meeting therefore adjourned at 4.20 p.m. and reconvened at 4.40 p.m.

Upon reconvening the meeting, IT WAS RECOMMENDED that Employment Committee:

- (i) Request officers to undertake work to establish the differential between the cost of insuring a vehicle for private/personal use, and insurance which covered use for business purposes;
- (ii) Request officers to investigate options in respect of car hire arrangements, taking into account that any agreement would need to have the capacity to provide vehicles at short notice.

Meeting closed at 4.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN
Times Not Specified