



Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Consultative Panel held at the
on 23 January 2001

Chairman - Kempsey (Chairman)

Cllrs Cox, Crane, Law, Franklin, Goffrey, Peach and Rainey

Trade Union Representatives: L Wright (UNISON), A Baxter (UNISON), D Jones (GMB),
R Talbot, (T&GWU), J Nolan (T&G), J Oliver (T&G), Phil Gooden (UNISON)

1. Apologies for absence and change of membership

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Bird and Adrian Axtell. Councillors Lakhanpaul and Ward had resigned from the Committee and Councillors Goffrey and Rainey had been appointed.

2. Budget Consultation with Trade Unions

The Director of Corporate Services advised us of the process for the budget consultation and the observations from the meeting would be reported to the Cabinet Meeting on 4 February. The budget and the Council Tax would then be set at the Council Meeting on the 13 February. The Director gave a brief outline of the national picture (government's model), local position, main features of Government finance settlement, budget strategy and the budget build up on what was available to be spent and the Council Tax level.

Following the presentation the Chairman asked the Trade Unions for their comments which were recorded as follows:-

- (i) The Trade Unions asked for the breakdown of the £2million efficiency savings, in this figure £840,000 had been identified as employees. Clarification was sought on what this actually meant and it was explained that although there were no live redundancies at the present time a number of vacancies would remain unfilled.
- (ii) There was a moratorium on recruitment at the present time and directors now needed to complete a Decision Notice which was signed by Councillors Peach and Ridgway before any posts were advertised. Councillor Kempsey advised that from the £600,000 identified from vacancies it was the Administration's intention to use £400,000 on filling vacant posts.
- (iii) Directors have to work within their cash limited budgets and take into account the need to improve performance indicators and unit costs around these, re-look at how they operate and continue to improve service delivery. We noted it may just be a case of delaying the filling of a post and identifying the consequences on the service provided.

- (iv) The Trade Unions were particularly concerned about the effect this was having on existing members of staff covering for vacancies. In particular the continual cover for someone puts pressure on the existing staff which could lead to stress and sickness, which the Trade Union had understood was one of the main problems in Social Services.
- (v) We were advised that staffing costs are approximately 70% of the total budget for the Council.
- (vi) Council Kemsell assured the Trade Unions that Human Resources were considering the overall effect on existing members of staff who were covering for vacant posts, looking at initiatives to develop staff including relevant training and improving staff morale generally.
- (vii) The reduction in budget on traffic flow from last year was also explained by the Director.

The meeting having commenced at 3.00pm concluded At 3.45pm.

CHAIRMAN
Times Not Specified