

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on 8 September 2005 at 4.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors: Tricia Gibbs (Chairman), T. W. Hone, D Sheard and Martin Stears.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Strategic Director of Customer Services, Democratic Services Manager, Head of Human Resources, Employee Relations Officer, Learning & Development Projects Officer, Allan Bowen (GMB), Tara Page (Unison), Committee & Member Services Officer.*

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor F.J. Smith, Chief Executive and R. Tiffin.

**16. MINUTES**

It was agreed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2005 be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**17. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No items were presented for consideration by the Committee.

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interests were made during the meeting.

**19. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services that set out the method for calculating membership of the Council Committees, with particular reference to increasing the Membership of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC).

***It was agreed:***

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That a recommendation to increase the Membership of the JSCC Committee to seven, subject to the maintenance of the political balance of the Council, be made to the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

**20. STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM**

The Head of Human Resources presented the Minutes of Staff Consultation Forum meetings held on 1 June 2005, 6 July 2005 and 43 August 2005. The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee that the letters advising weekly paid staff about moving to monthly pay status had been posted to the relevant members of staff.

***It was agreed*** that the information provided be noted.

## 21. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY

The Head of Human Resources presented a report that sought the Committee's endorsement of the implementation of the Council's Religious Observance Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Religious Observance Policy  
Appendix B – Consultation comments and HR responses.

The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee that 'Atheism' had now been removed as a definition of a religious belief and that the policy had been amended accordingly.

***It was agreed*** that the Religious Observance Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

## 22. BIKES FOR WORK INITIATIVE

The Employee Relations Officer presented a report of the Head of Human Resources that sought the Committee's endorsement for the implementation of a Bike's for Work Initiative. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Time Commitment Table  
Appendix B – Time Scale Graph  
Appendix C – Consultation and HR responses.

The Employee Relations Officer advised the Committee:

- That the take up rate of the initiative was between 3% and 5% of staff
- That there was no process in place to monitor if staff were using the bikes on a 50% work/personal basis as this was regarded as a matter of trust.

***It was agreed*** that the Bike's for Work Initiative be endorsed.

## 23. SECONDMENT POLICY

The Employee Relations Officer presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services that sought the Committee's endorsement for the implementation of a Secondment Policy as attached at Appendix A. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Secondment Policy  
Appendix B – Consultation Comments and HR responses.

The Committee agreed that this policy was a very useful tool for the attraction and retention of staff and also for staff development.

***It was agreed*** that the Secondment Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

## 24. HR FSR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Head of Human Resources presented a report that sought to update the Committee regarding the progress made against the HR FSR Service Improvement Plan as attached at Appendix A. The following document was appended to the report:

Appendix A – HR FSR Service Improvement Plan update.

During a discussion that took place, the following comments were made:

- That the items on the Action Plan had mainly been completed
- That the ongoing Action points contained within the Action Plan were in accord with the People Strategy
- That the introduction of the new payroll system had been delayed due to lack of support. This had now become a critical issue and a bid was to be made to the Strategy

Fund. The Strategic Director of Customer Services advised the Committee that due to many reasons, it was not considered either desirable nor cost effective to outsource the payroll system

- That a Learning and Development Manager had been appointed and was due to start on 3 October 2005.

**It was agreed** that the progress made against the HR FSR Service Improvement Plan be noted.

## 25. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources presented a report that sought to update the Committee regarding the progress made with the implementation of the People Strategy. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Progress made in implementing the People Strategy 2005 – 2008

Appendix B – Measures of Success for the People Strategy.

Councillor M Stears expressed his concern about the staffing level in Committee Services and its impact upon Member development. The Committee was advised that a Senior Committee and Member Services Officer was now in place.

**It was agreed** that the progress made with the implementation of the People strategy be noted.

## 26. INDUCTION POLICY

The Learning & Development Projects Officer presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services that sought to gain the endorsement of the Committee for the implementation of an Induction Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Induction Policy

Appendix B – Policy Review Feedback.

The Learning & Development Projects Officer advised the Committee that he policy included temporary and Play Scheme staff.

**It was agreed** that the Induction Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

## 27. PROFESSIONAL & VOCATIONAL STUDY POLICY

The Learning & Development Projects Officer presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services that sought to gain the endorsement of the Committee for the implementation of a Professional & Vocational Study Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report. The following document was appended to the report:

Appendix A – Professional & Vocational Study Policy.

Councillor T. Hone requested that 'MBA' be added to the list of post graduate courses that would be considered for support.

It was confirmed that the new policy would not impact on existing three year courses.

**It was agreed** that the Professional & Vocational Study Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed, subject to the following amendments:

- (1) That at Appendix A, Section 4, 'MBA' be added to the list of post graduate courses to be considered for support;
- (2) That at Appendix A, section 6. Conditions of Assistance (d) the word 'is' be replaced with the word 'it'.

**28. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Learning & Development Projects Officer presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services that sought to gain the endorsement of the Committee for the implementation of a Learning & Development Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix A – Learning & Development Policy
- Appendix B – Policy Review Feedback.

***It was agreed*** that the Learning & Development Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

The meeting closed at 5.10 p.m.

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Chairman