



Minutes of the meeting of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY
28 SEPTEMBER 1999 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Harnett, Clarke, Conchie, Kilkenny, Morsley, Newcombe, Pugh,
Saunders and Tallack

Officers: H Miller (Chief Executive), P Coveney (Strategic Director Resources),
B Bithell (Head of Human Resources), J Deere (Human Resources Manager -
Employee Relations and Corporate Support), C Stanton (Senior Human
Resources Officer - Employee Relations) and I Reed (Senior Committee
Manager)

Apology: Councillor Tapp

P10/00 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Committee held on 29 June 1999, be approved and
signed by the Chair as a correct record.

P11/0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The officers present declared pecuniary interests in the Item on the Review of
Early Retirement and Employment Stability Policies and Procedures.

P12/00 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

The Committee received a presentation from Milton Keynes General National
Health Service Trust, on the services provided to the Council under the
Occupational Health contract.

RESOLVED -

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That the Committee receives reports and considers Occupational Health
procedures from time to time.

P13/00

REVIEW OF SUB-COMMITTEE

Further to the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 1999 (Minute P4/00 refers), the Committee discussed the re-appointment of the Pay Sub-Committee for the Council year 1999/2000.

It was considered that any issues that might arise could be addressed by the Personnel Panel, that was set up at the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 1999.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Pay Sub-Committee be not re-appointed.
2. That any issues that may arise for consideration be addressed by the Personnel Panel.

P14/00

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: EARLY RETIREMENT AND VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

The Committee considered a report which summarised the Internal Audit report for the Human Resources Division, on Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy.

The Internal Audit review was carried out in January 1999 to identify and evaluate the controls over the granting of Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy for salaried staff.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

P15/00

REVIEW OF EARLY RETIREMENT AND EMPLOYMENT STABILITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Further to the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 1999 (Minute P7/00 refers), the Committee considered reports which set out a review of the Council's Early Retirement and Employment Stability Policies and Procedures.

The Committee also received the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting held on 8 June 1999 (Minute S6/00 refers).

The Committee was also circulated with the comments of Buckinghamshire County Council's Pensions Manager.

The Committee also noted that the comments of UNISON had been circulated with the agenda papers.

The Committee's comments were sought on the procedures and decision making process, already reported at Minute P7/00. It was the intention of the Committee to report its comments, along with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission, for consideration and adoption by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee noted that formal consultation had taken place with the Trade Unions on the revised policies and procedures, recommended by the Scrutiny Commission.

RECOMMENDED -

1. That the comments and amendments made by the Pensions Manager of Buckinghamshire County Council on the review of Early Retirement and Employment Stability Policies and Procedures, be accepted.
2. That the policy on Early Retirement be accepted, subject to the following recommendations:
 - (a) that the Authority's current practice of considering early retirement cases from 50 years of age continues, with no further age restriction imposed;
 - (b) that further investigation be undertaken regarding the feasibility and implications of a voluntary reduction in hours for employees nearing retirement age and using this as a management option;
 - (c) that no change be made to the policy adopted in October 1998 of awarding up to 6 2/3 added years, dependent upon length of service, in cases of early retirement on grounds of efficiency or redundancy (up to 10 years in exceptional cases);
 - (d) that a maximum payback period for the cost of pension strain of 5 years or the period to the retiree's normal retirement age, whichever ever is the lower, be adopted;
 - (e) that the criteria relating to the Council's discretion to waive any actual reduction made under the '85 year rule' in relation to early retirement, be given further consideration at an appropriate time;
 - (f) that an Exceptions Panel be set up to consider any individual case which falls outside the proposed policy or when exceptional circumstances are deemed to apply, replacing the existing Special Circumstances Panel;
 - (g) that the early referral of employees after 4 weeks' sickness absence to the Council's Occupational Health Physician is noted for implementation; and
 - (h) that prior to submission to the Service Committee, the Head of Human Resources and Treasurer must confirm that all staffing and financial implications are included in the report and that the application meets the criteria laid out in the Council's policy.
3. That the Employment Stability Policy be agreed, subject to the following:
 - (a) that the existing protection arrangements be noted, subject to review at a later date;

- (b) that in line with proposed legislation, now taken on board, when a fixed term contract of one year or more comes to an end the employee be given prior consideration for vacant posts within the Council along with any permanent employees who are deemed to be in a redundancy situation;
- (c) that redundancy payments be based on actual weekly pay as opposed to the statutory maximum weekly pay;
- (d) that it be noted that no protection of salary is currently offered in cases of ill-health redeployment, but that the policy in relation to salary protection be reviewed at a later date;
- (e) that the formal notification/consultation of all the avoidance measures be given detailed consideration, with Voluntary Redundancy/Voluntary Retirement only being used as a last resort.

4. That the comments of UNISON be accepted for further consideration.

P16/00

CONSTITUTION OF TRADE UNION CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION

Further to consideration of the Constitution at the meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 1999 (Minute P5/00 refers), the Committee considered a report which set out recommendations which had been proposed by the Joint Negotiating Committee at its meeting held on 7 September 1999, which aimed to ensure that the Constitutions were clear and to give scope for an agreed form of proportional representation of the Trade Unions at meetings.

RESOLVED -

That the following amendments be made to the Constitutions for Level 2 and 3 meetings:

- (a) that paragraph 1.1(a) of the Constitution for Level 2 and 3 meetings be amended as follows:

The maximum number of trade union representatives will be twenty. The allocation of the representatives among the trade unions will be determined by the unions themselves.

- (b) that paragraph 1.1(c) of the Constitution for Level 3 meetings be amended as follows:

At the end of the last sentence replace '... a member of the same Trade Union.' with '... a member of any Trade Union recognised by the Council.'

- (c) that paragraph 1.1(e) of the Constitution for Level 3 meetings be amended as follows:

The Head of Human Resources or her/his representative will attend all meetings in the capacity of Joint Secretary and the attendance of any other Officers of the Council or full time Trade Union Officials to act in an advisory capacity will be at the invitation of the Joint Secretaries. Any such attendance proposed by one Joint Secretary will not be unreasonably refused by the other Joint Secretary.

- (d) that the following paragraph be inserted prior to 1.7 Quorum in the Constitution for Level 3 meetings:

Voting

The voting shall be by a show of hands, unless the Joint Negotiating Committee decides otherwise. No resolution shall be regarded as carried unless it has been approved by a simple majority of the members present on each side, voting separately.

P17/00

SOUTH EAST EMPLOYERS CONFERENCE

The Committee was advised that the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting held on 15 September 1999 (Minute PR56/00 refers), had agreed that the Council should be represented at the South East Employers conference by three Members, in the ratio two Labour Members and one Liberal Democrat Member.

It was further noted that the conference was to be held between 1-3 December 1999.

RESOLVED -

1. That Councillors Edwards, Kilkenny and a representative of the Liberal Democrat Group, be nominated to attend the South East Employers conference, to be held between 1-3 December 1999.
2. That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to agree to the additional nomination of Councillor Morsley to attend the conference.

P18/00

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - RETENTION OF STAFF

Further to the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 15 September 1999 (Minute PR84/00 refers), the Committee considered a report which sought approval for the cessation of the retention scheme within the Information Technology Division of the Resources Directorate, for both new employees appointed on or after 1 December 1999 and those current employees who had not subscribed to the scheme by that date.

RESOLVED -

That the Loyalty Bonus scheme be ceased for all specialist IT employees who have not joined the scheme, or taken up their appointments, before 1 December 1999.

P19/00

JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee held on 7 September 1999.

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes be received and adopted.

P20/00

EMPLOYER AWARD - THE WINNING COMBINATION AND APPRENTICE AWARD

The Committee had been circulated with a report which recorded the Council's recent success as a provider of training for young people.

It was further noted that the Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise formally recognised Synergy's Transport Section, as a provider of quality training opportunities for apprentices.

It was noted that the Transport Section had been nominated for the award by the Job Training Provider (Training Options Colleges), and a Council employee had recently completed his Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship, and was now a fully qualified fitter.

RESOLVED -

That at the next meeting of the Council, the Mayor be invited to receive and congratulate Synergy's Transport Section and Council employee, Daniel Mullins, who had successfully nominated the Section as a provider of quality training opportunities for apprentices.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.05 PM