

Motherwell, 10 February 2000 at 10 am.

A Meeting of the **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (MANUAL/CRAFT)**

PRESENT

Councillor McElroy, Convener; Provost McCulloch; Councillors Gordon, McCallum, Selfridge and Valentine, and B. Docherty and A. Fair, AEEU; P. Cairns, A. Duncan and W. Lindsay, GMB; J. Ellis, MSF; M. Gaughan, R. Power and M. Veldon, TGWU; S. Dillon and M. Farrell, UCATT and C. Llewellyn, UNISON.

CHAIR

Councillor McElroy (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Committee Services Officer, Head of Personnel Services, Chief Personnel Officer, Principal Health and Safety Officer, Expenditure Manager, Roads Manager and Personnel and Administration Manager, Construction Services Department.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Chadha and Saunders; G. Smith, Vice-Convener and G. Wilmshurst, TGWU.

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (MANUAL/CRAFT) - MINUTE

1. There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (Manual/Craft) held on 3 December 1999.

The Committee noted and approved the terms of the Minute.

LADDER SAFETY DURING PAINTING OPERATIONS - CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

2. With regard to paragraph 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when it was agreed, *inter alia*, that the use of the micro lite safety device be investigated further, there was submitted a report dated 31 January 2000 by the Head of Personnel Services regarding securing ladders during painting operations (1) advising of the background to the introduction of the micro lite device; (2) setting out the legal requirements relevant to the use of ladders; (3) detailing the results of the investigation into the strap tie system using anchors and the micro lite system; (4) highlighting the instructions and training given to painter chargehands and Shop Stewards, and (5) intimating that revised departmental safety instructions "Safe Use of Ladders, Step Ladders and Trestles" had been issued in September 1999.

The Roads Manager advised the Committee that the Construction Industry Training Board would commence training of relevant employees in the Department of Construction Services on the use of the micro lite safety device in the near future.

The Committee noted that the Head of Personnel Services would liaise with the Director of Housing and Property Services who should investigate the possibility of obtaining the actual cost of providing, maintaining and testing anchors at all appropriate Council buildings and, if reasonably practicable, developing and implementing a programme of installation and maintenance; (b) liaise with the General Manager, Construction Services concerning his arrangements for training all relevant employees in the safe use of ladders and the micro lite system; (c) liaise with the General Manager, Construction

Services and request that he make all necessary accessories for levelling and securing the base of the ladder readily available to users, and (d) liaise with the General Manager, Construction Services with a view to him providing more detailed written guidance on the use of accessories and when the ladder can be footed.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH TENDER - UPDATE

3. With reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when the Committee were advised, inter alia, that the medical referral system was the subject of a tendering process, the Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee that the specification for the occupational health services would shortly be finalised and the tender expected to be advertised during the week beginning 20 March 2000 in various publications including the professional health journal inviting expressions of interest with an anticipated contract start date of October 2000.

The Committee noted the progress being made with the tender for the occupational health service.

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVICE TO EMPLOYEES - UPDATE

4. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee (1) that an advertisement would shortly be placed within the press seeking interest in providing an Independent Financial Advice Service to Employees which would be available to employees throughout their working lives, and (2) that the advisory service would be provided at no cost to the employer or to the employee with the adviser only receiving commission if a recommendation had been taken up by the employee.

The Committee noted the progress made to provide an Independent Financial Advice Service to employees.

HARASSMENT SUPPORT OFFICERS

5. The Head of Personnel Services (1) reminded the Committee that the Council had implemented a harassment policy; (2) intimated that fifteen departmental employees at various levels had been identified and trained for the role of Harassment Support Officers to provide support to employees when faced with harassment in the workplace, and (3) indicated that the network of Harassment Support Officers had been publicised throughout the Council.

The Committee noted the identification and training of the Harassment Support Officers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY FORUM

6. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when it was agreed inter alia that proposals for a corporate Health and Safety Forum involving officers and trade union officials be drawn up, the Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee that a framework for the Health and Safety Forum had been drafted and, when finalised, would be submitted to departments for their comments and then to the trade unions for consultation.

The Committee noted the progress made with the formation of a Health and Safety Forum.

OUTSTANDING GRIEVANCES

7. The Committee noted that the matter of outstanding grievances had been addressed.

TIME OFF FOR TRADE UNION DUTIES

8. With reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when it was agreed that the approved policy in relation to time off for Trade Union duties be issued to the Trade Union side for information and clarification, the Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee (1) that the arrangements for time off for Trade Union duties were being reviewed; (2) that a guidance document on how to apply the policy for time off for Trade Union duties was being revised and would be issued to Directors in the near future, and (3) that the guidance document would be issued to the Trade Unions for information.

The Committee noted the proposal to issue the guidance document to the Trade Unions.

SINGLE STATUS - SUPPLY OF RED BOOK TO SHOP STEWARDS

9. The Trade Union representatives requested that a copy of the Red Book be supplied to all Shop Stewards. The Head of Personnel Services (1) intimated that the Council was awaiting the formal copies of the Book from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA); (2) explained the financial difficulties of agreeing to the request and expressed concerns regarding the updating of the books, and (3) advised that all Shop Stewards would have access to the Red Book through individual departments or the Personnel Division of the Department of Administration.

The Committee noted (1) that the Head of Personnel Services would investigate (a) the possibility of COSLA putting the Red Book on the internet to enable wider access, and (b) the resource implications of the request by the Trade Unions, and (2) that the Head of Personnel Services submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee on the outcome of the investigations.

SINGLE STATUS - MISAPPLICATION OF THE RED BOOK

10. The Trade Union representatives requested the up to date position on (a) the perceived misapplication of the clause in the Red Book on sickness on public holidays, and (b) the reduction in the working week for manual workers. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee (1) that the issue of the interpretation of the clause in relation to sick leave on public holidays had been taken up by senior Trade Union negotiators at COSLA and, should the advice from COSLA change, the Council would apply that advice retrospectively, and (2) that Working Groups had been set up to discuss the implications of the provision in the Red Book to reduce the working week for manual workers from 39 hours to 38 hours from 1 April 2000 following which consultation would take place with Trade Unions on the issue.

The Committee noted the Council's position with regard to the clause in the Red Book on sick leave on public holidays and the forthcoming negotiations on the reduction in the working week.

WAGE SLIPS - ADVERTISING

11. The Trade Union representatives raised questions about the use of wage slips for advertising and the concerns regarding the wording used for increased subscriptions for Trade Union dues. The Expenditure Manager advised the Committee that pay slips could be used (1) to convey short messages to employees which supplemented other information available; (2) to deliver inserts to

employees on financial matters following a decision of the Finance Committee, and (3) to print advertisements or messages on the pay slips itself. He further explained to the Committee (1) the background to the wording of the messages regarding Trade Union subscriptions, and (2) that income could be generated for the Council by using the advertising facility.

The Committee noted (1) that the Head of Personnel Services, in conjunction with the Director of Finance, would investigate (a) the matter of the wording of messages following changes in legislation concerning Trade Union subscriptions; (b) the possibility of Trade Unions utilising the facility, and (c) the legislation regarding employees' rights to not receive advertising in this way, and (2) that the Head of Personnel Services submit a report to a future meeting of this Committee on the outcome of the investigations.

PENSION RIGHTS

12. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when it was agreed that it be noted that Strathclyde Pension Fund Office was responsible for distributing information on the Pension Scheme to employees, the Trade Union representatives raised questions regarding the rule changes on pension rights and the subsequent effect on the retirement of employees. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee (1) that the Council had decided that each case for early retirement would be referred to the Personnel Services (Early Retirement) Sub-Committee on an individual basis, and (2) that a Group Life Assurance Scheme was in force.

The Trade Union representatives questioned the admission of groups into the Superannuation Scheme referring particularly to the Construction Services Department DLO and the forthcoming Public Private Partnership. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee that discussions would take place with Strathclyde Pension Fund Office regarding the position of the employees in the DLO, in conjunction with the General Manager, Construction Services, and that the Trade Unions would be advised of the position once it had been clarified.

The Committee noted (1) the position with the changes in the Pension Scheme, and (2) the discussions taking place with Strathclyde Pension Fund Office regarding the position of the employees in the DLO.

CAPABILITY DISMISSALS

13. With reference to paragraph 14 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when inter alia the matter regarding administering capability dismissals was to be raised at the Personnel Practitioners Forum, the Trade Union representatives raised questions regarding (1) the capability dismissal procedures; (2) the guidance regarding the definition of an individual being permanently unfit for work or for the specific post prior to being retired, and (3) redeployment when an employee was declared unfit for their particular type of work. The Chief Personnel Officer explained the procedure regarding capability dismissals in accordance with the Absence Management Policy and advised that each case was looked at on an individual basis and against the requirements of the service. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee that the guidance referred to did not apply in Scotland, that similar advice was expected to be issued in the future in Scotland and that when someone was declared unfit for their type of work redeployment was vigorously investigated but that there had been problems associated with finding alternative employment particularly with employees in the Department of Construction Services.

The Committee noted that advice would be forthcoming regarding the definition of permanently unfit.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION

14. The Committee noted that this item had been withdrawn.

SPECIAL LEAVE PROVISIONS

15. With reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 3 December 1999 when it was agreed *inter alia* that details of any Council Policies causing particular concern should be drawn to the attention of the Head of Personnel Services for investigation, the Trade Union representatives raised questions regarding (1) the special leave provision, and (2) consultation regarding Council Policy Documents. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee (1) that the Special Leave Policy was being reviewed and would be issued to the Trade Unions for consultation, and (2) that the Vice-Convenor of this Committee had agreed to submit details of any Council Policies causing particular concern to allow investigation.

The Committee noted (1) the review of the Special Leave Policy, and (2) that particular concerns of the trade unions on Council Policies would be submitted to the Head of Personnel Services for investigation.

PROVISION OF LONG SERVICE AWARD

16. The Trade Union representatives raised the issue of the provision of a long service award and suggested that employees be awarded £500 for 25 years service, 30 years service, 35 years service and 40 years service retrospectively from 1 April 1996. The Head of Personnel Services advised the Committee of the budgetary position of the Council but agreed to investigate some means of recognising long service of employees.

The Committee noted that the Head of Personnel Services would investigate the possibility of recognising the long service of employees.

REVENUE ESTIMATES 2000/2001

17. The Trade Union representatives raised concerns regarding the consultation process with individual departments on the setting of Council Budgets for the year 2000/2001. The Head of Personnel Services explained the budget process to the Committee, that the consultation process was ongoing over a short time scale and that budgets were likely to be set on 9 March 2000.

The Committee noted the concerns of the Trade Union representatives regarding the consultation process.