

**LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE  
3 JUNE 2014  
4.05 - 5.10 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Angell, Mrs Angell, Blatchford and Leake  
David Allais, UNISON (In the Chair)  
Lorna Cameron, UNISON  
Miriam Harvey, GMB

**Also Present:**

Steven Caplan, Chief Officer: Property  
Tony Madden, Chief Officer: Human Resources

**1. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

The Committee noted that Miriam Harvey had taken over from Tara Staines as the representative of the GMB.

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest at the start of the meeting.

**3. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2014 were approved as a correct record.

**4. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**5. Employment Committee: Agenda and Related Matters**

The Committee discussed the following items which were to be presented to the Employment Committee on 18 June 2014:

- 1) Recruitment & Retention – Children's Social Care
- 2) Facilities Review
- 3) ASCH&H – Complaints Manager's Role
- 4) Proposed Redundancy – South East Grid for Learning
- 5) Retention of Market Premia – Senior Building Control Officer
- 6) Annual Performance Report on Retirements & Redundancies

- 7) Review of Dementia Services (Information)
- 8) Pay Negotiations NJC for Local Authority Employees 2014/15 (Information)

In addition, the Committee received a further report entitled Grounds Maintenance – TUPE Transfer Update for information following the award of the grounds maintenance contract to a private contractor.

The following comments were made:

### **Recruitment & Retention – Children’s Social Care**

The Committee was advised that the proposal had been developed following extensive discussion at officer level and was considered the best option to address a problem which required immediate action although a more detailed review was being undertaken to assess whether a better long term solution could be identified.

The Committee expressed a number of concerns about this proposal including:

- That by awarding additional payments to one group of staff, the Council may alienate others who did not receive such payments
- That staff in Adult Social Care were likely to be facing extra pressures as a result of the Care Act.
- That pay was only one element in this issue, the impact of workloads on them could be as important a factor in retention. Staff were keen to do a quality job but struggled with the volume of cases.

### **Facilities Review**

The Committee noted that the actions taken following consultation seemed to have allayed staff concerns and the Building Officers were now understood to accept the proposals.

### **ASCH&H – Complaints Manager’s Role**

In response to a question, the Committee was advised that the officer who would be taking on the role was understood to have sufficient capacity to undertake it effectively.

### **Proposed Redundancy – South East Grid for Learning**

The Committee had no comments on this item.

### **Retention of Market Premia – Senior Building Control Officer**

The Committee was advised that the position had not changed since a 15% Market Premia had been approved for the principal post a year ago. In response to a question about whether 15% was the right figure, the Chief Officer: Human Resources, indicated that he believed it was and that this was generally regarded as the Council’s maximum payment.

In addition, the Chief Officer: Human Resources undertook to write to Councillor Leake directly on the issue of whether certain qualifications and requirements were considered essential for the postholder.

## **ACTION: CO:HR**

### **Annual Performance Report on Retirements & Redundancies**

The Chief Officer: Human Resources answered a question relating to whether there was any difference between “injury” and “sickness” and indicated that what was written on the doctor’s certificate was accepted.

There were no other issues raised regarding this report.

### **Review of Dementia Services**

The Committee had no comments on this information item.

### **Pay Negotiations NJC for Local Authority Employees 2014/15**

The Committee had no comments on this information item but noted that UNISON would be staging a day of action on 10 July 2014. It also noted that the result of its members’ ballot had been resounding support for strike action.

### **Grounds Maintenance – TUPE Transfer Update**

The Committee noted that UNISON believed that the normally good communications that took place between the Council and the trades unions had been absent in this case. As a result a letter expressing these views had been sent to the Chief Executive. There was particular concern that there had been insufficient time to consult members effectively or prepare their own tender as had happened in the past. The Committee noted that the latter would not have been practical in the case as it had not been a compulsory competitive tendering exercise in the traditional sense as this service was tendered as part of the wider Public Realm services contract. However, it was acknowledged that lessons could be learned from the manner in which the consultation had been handled.

However, the Committee was advised that the chosen contractor had behaved impeccably in its dealings with UNISON which had gone a long way to reassuring staff.

*NB: Councillor Leake declared an interest in this matter as Continental, the chosen contractor, had been a past client of his.*

## **6. Matters Raised by Trade Unions**

### **1 Family and Parenting Work Consultation**

UNISON drew the Committee’s attention to the Family and Parenting Work consultation.

Concerns were expressed about the nature of the consultation which had left UNISON feeling that they had not been properly consulted or that those undertaking the consultation had fully understood the nature of the work. New job descriptions did not refer to elements of the existing role including their involvement in child protection conferences. If implemented, staff could face salary cuts of £3-5k although the Chief Officer: Human Resources made the point that the Council’s pay protection arrangements would be in place.

In the absence of a representative from Children, Young People & Learning, the Chief Officer: Human Resources advised that he was aware of the work which he understood was related to the 2014/15 budget decisions but could not advise on the detailed points being raised. In the circumstances, it was agreed that the Director of Children, Young People & Learning should be asked to provide:

- 1 A briefing note on the issue for Councillors Angell and Leake and David Allais; and,
- 2 Prepare a report for the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.

***ACTION: DCYPL***

No other issues were raised.

**CHAIRMAN**