

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 25th March 2010. - Minute of Meeting of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE. City Council Representatives:- Councillors Farquharson, Fletcher, Leslie, Kevin Stewart, John West (as substitute for Councillor Kiddie) and Young.

Trade Union Representatives:- David McCulloch and Mike Middleton (GMB); Steve Clunas (UCATT) (as substitute for John Noble); Liz Carson, Karen Donnelly, Lesley Dunbar, Deirdre Macdonald, Christiane Michel-Stephen (as substitute for Karen Maxfield) and Michael Scroggie (UNISON); and Joe Craig and Steven Robb (UNITE).

Officers in attendance:- Stewart Carruth, Director for Corporate Governance; Ewan Sutherland, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Jeff Capstick, Personnel Manager; and Roderick MacBeath, Acting Senior Democratic Services Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Kevin Stewart and Young declared an interest in the following subject due to their memberships of Trade Unions, those being UNISON for Councillor Kevin Stewart and UNITE for Councillor Young. Neither Councillor felt it necessary to withdraw from the meeting during consideration thereof.

At the commencement of the meeting, Members of the Committee had been circulated with a copy of the current Constitution. Mr MacBeath proposed that due to meetings of the Committee now only being called when necessary, a Chairperson be appointed for each meeting rather than on an annual basis and that the Committee decide whether they wished to appoint a Vice-Chairperson.

Councillor Kevin Stewart (a) sought clarification on whether the meeting had been called appropriately in terms of the Constitution; (b) queried the current membership of the Committee; (c) stated that the Constitution was severely outdated and required substantial revision; and (d) explained that the present meeting would be better held after staff had been given their chance to comment on the proposals for employment cost savings during the consultative period. Karen Donnelly replied to this latter point by stating that Union representatives wished certain questions answered which would assist staff in their responses.

Mr MacBeath advised (1) that UNISON had requested in writing, supported by GMB, that a meeting of this Committee be convened and in terms of 8(a) of the Constitution, this constituted a majority of Trade Union members (six Unison and three GMB); (2) that in terms of the current Constitution, this meeting and all future meetings would be classed as a Special Meeting; (3) that Councillor Young had been appointed by Council to this Committee following the local government elections in 2007; and (4) that UNISON had notified the Committee Clerk that there would be a change to two members on the Committee which would be decided at

the UNISON Branch Meeting on Wednesday 24th March, 2010, hence two representatives had not been named on the Notice calling the meeting,

At this point in the proceedings, the meeting adjourned for a recess.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

1. Upon the resumption of the meeting, Mr MacBeath called for nominations for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, whereupon:-

Joe Craig UNITE, moved, seconded by Deirdre Macdonald, UNISON:-
that Steve Robb, UNITE, be appointed as Chairperson of the Committee.

There being no further nominations, Steve Robb assumed the Chair.

Councillor Kevin Stewart, moved, seconded by Councillor Fletcher:-
that Councillor Leslie be appointed as Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

There were no further nominations.

The Committee resolved:-

that for this meeting, Steve Robb, UNITE, be appointed as Chairperson and Councillor Leslie be appointed as Vice-Chairperson.

APOLOGIES

2. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Kiddie, John Noble, UCATT, and Karen Maxfield, UNISON.

CONSTITUTION

3. The Committee had before it a copy of the current Constitution. Councillor Kevin Stewart noted that the Committee had not met since 2006 and that the current Constitution required significant revision. Karen Donnelly, UNISON, agreed that the Constitution needed to be looked at and that this should be done and reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to set up a short term working group to discuss the terms of the Constitution and report back to a future meeting of this Committee; and
- (ii) that the membership of the working group consist of three elected members (Councillors Farquharson, Leslie and Kevin Stewart), and one member of each Trade Union represented on the Committee, with nominations to be provided to the Clerk.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Fletcher declared an interest in the following item of business in relation to any reference to COSLA, by virtue of his position as Vice President of that organisation. He did not feel it necessary to withdraw from the meeting.

EMPLOYMENT COSTS

4. The Committee had before it a request from UNISON, that a meeting of the JCC be convened as a matter of urgency to discuss the Council's proposals for reducing employment costs.

The Committee heard Karen Donnelly (a) advise that UNISON felt it necessary to discuss the issue of employment costs with elected members to gain an insight into the political decision to save £4.5 million on employment costs; (b) explain that there were concerns that the staff groups which had been subject to reduced staff costs over the last few years would continue to face reductions in pay; (c) state that additional sums of money had been allocated into the Council's reserves for the financial year 2010/11 which added to the already healthy reserve figures and also that there was at present a forecast of 4.3% of under spend in the current financial year's budget; and (d) sought clarification on the under spend and as to whether there was any indication that this would reduce significantly over the next few weeks.

Mr Carruth, in response to the financial aspects mentioned above, stated that he did not expect that there would be any significant fluctuation in the under spend figures forecast. Councillor Kevin Stewart explained that the balances were healthier than before and that the Council intended to use the monies to modernise Services to help deliver front line services. Councillor Kevin Stewart also suggested that any increments should be paid on a performance basis and not as a routine payment; he also emphasised that the Council was looking at a raft of possible savings.

Karen Donnelly stated that the rate for the job was the top of the scale awarded for each post which had been agreed as part of the Equal Pay and Modernisation agreement and that this did not relate to a productivity bonus. Deirdre Macdonald explained that there were various Human Resource policies available to managers to assist them in managing the productivity of their employees.

Union representatives raised the apparently divisive issue of Teachers still being paid their agreed increments and queried why they were not part of the current proposal to freeze pay increments. Mr Capstick advised that the Council had to honour the nationally negotiated terms and conditions for Teachers as the Teachers' terms and conditions were unequivocal, whilst those for EPM contracts were not. Mr Capstick also stated that contracts of employment for all staff would be honoured.

Mike Middleton, GMB, sought clarification on the cost to the Authority for implementing Single Status. Councillor Fletcher provided the approximate cost for implementing Single Status and it was agreed to provide the Trade Unions with the actual cost. In response to queries about the cost and amount of agency staff, Councillor Kevin Stewart reaffirmed that the Council wished to reduce the use of

agency staff significantly but explained that the Council needed to go outside for sickness cover, specialist support and areas where it was difficult recruit.

Further clarification was sought on whether as part of the budget, money had been allocated to cover any nationally agreed pay increase that was currently being negotiated with COSLA. Mr Carruth advised that any increase to salary costs as a result of the on-going negotiations would be taken from the Council's reserves.

At this point in the proceedings the Chairperson brought the discussions to an end.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) that the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provide members of the Trade Union with the actual costs to the Council for implementing Single Status; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the foregoing discussion.

- STEVE ROBB, Chairperson