

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 4TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 2.00 P.M.**

- P Councillor Comer (in the Chair)
- P Councillor Bees
- P Councillor Eddy
- P Councillor C. Price
- P Councillor Wright

Councillor Bees opened the meeting and items 1,2 3 and 8 on the agenda were addressed prior to Councillor Comer's arrival.

**HR  
26.9/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (item 1)**

There were no apologies or substitutions.

**HR  
27.9/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (item 2)**

There were no additional declarations of interest.

**HR  
28.9/08 MINUTES – HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 24TH JULY 2008 (Item 3)**

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**Matters arising:**

**HR21.07.08: TUPE: Terms and closed pension provisions.**

Members requested that a copy of the minute be forwarded to the Cabinet for their information.

**HR**  
**29.9/08 PUBLIC FORUM (item 4)**

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>AUTHOR OF STATEMENT</b>	<b>SUBJECT(S) OF STATEMENT</b>	<b>No.</b>
5 6	Unison Dave Bennett	New Opportunities Procedure – Revised Policy. Mileage Allowance – Increase and Review	<b>1</b>
5 6 7	Unite Steve Paines	New Opportunities Procedure - Revised Policy Mileage Allowances - Increase and Review Work- Life Balance policy	<b>2</b>
8	Unite Robert Longstaff	Caretaking Service Review	<b>3</b>
5 6 7	GMB Rowena Hayward/Liz Bebbington	New Opportunities Procedure - Revised Policy Mileage Allowances - Increase and Review Work-Life Balance policy	<b>Late submission</b>

The public forum items were heard prior to the agenda item to which they referred and considered during the Committee's discussions.

**HR**  
**30.9/08 NEW OPPORTUNITIES PROCEDURE - REVISED POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources (agenda item no. 5) advising of key changes to the New Opportunities Procedure(NOP), its conversion into a framework format and noting the implementation date for 'job matching' to a suitable alternative post from 15% - 20% would be 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

The HR Manager presented her report and following comments made in the public forum statements and points discussed by the Committee the following points were clarified:

- The intention of the revised policy was to be more inclusive and to ensure more staff were retained by the authority. The

success of the policy was reliant on the continued successful working partnership between management, trade unions and HR officers.

- Legally the LA cannot redeploy into schools as appointments are governors' decisions and the LA cannot interfere with the process. However, HR do work very hard with schools to ensure we retain experienced staff and have had some success in redeploying vulnerable staff from one school to another. HR officers would continue to work closely with schools to reinforce the message to schools.
- Paragraph 5.1 - the intention was exactly as the present policy, except that employees would have access to all vacancies across the Council from day 1 in the redeployment pool for a period of up to 12 months. This was consistent with the one council approach. It also allowed the policy to be flexible to deal with each case on an individual basis.
- Paragraph 5.2 - this had now been removed from the policy.
- Paragraph 5.3 - there was no change to the previous policy - the wording had been tightened up for clarity.
- Paragraph 12.4 - to be clarified.
- There was ambiguity surrounding the issue of contractual pay. Wording should reflect the Managing Change Policy - i.e 'contractual'.
- Paragraph 7.4 - a reference to 'Skills for Life' to be added.
- Paragraph 8.3 - the word 'directly ' to be replaced with 'broadly'.
- Paragraph 8.4(b) - 'should be' to be deleted.
- Paragraph 8.5 - it was envisaged that the collective experience of the team would be used when making decisions about the reasonableness of a job offer. It was not about 1 person making the decision. The recourse for any appeal would be through the Grievance Procedure. The paragraph was confusing and would be reworded.
- Paragraph 9.2 - the HR manager would arrange a meeting with the trade unions to discuss the issues further at management level.
- The term 'volunteer' had been discussed with trade unions and it was thought to be acceptable. It was always for employees to volunteer to accept a post where the contractual pay was more than 20%. No employee would be forced to accept such a post.
- Paragraph 9.2 - the bullet points to be numbered and clarified to note that an employee under notice would always take priority over someone not under notice.
- Paragraph 11.2 - to identify more clearly the extended period to which part-time employees would be entitled to work in

order to reach the required standard.

- Paragraph 15(i) - the second paragraph to become a separate point to which the subsequent subparagraphs referred.
- The Trade Unions expressed concern about the lack of appeal rights regarding alternative posts, and the possible 'domino effect' if higher graded staff were redeployed into posts at a much lower level. In response the Chair pointed out that there were major changes within the Council at the present time and it was important that everyone played their part in ensuring that attitudes to redeployment changed. It was important that all sides were committed to working together to enable employees to learn new skills and adapt to what would be ever changing roles within local authorities in the future.
- It was noted that there were still some areas that needed further discussions. The Committee agreed to the recommendations proposed but would require a report for information at their next meeting on the results of the on-going discussions.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the proposed amendments, as outlined in the report and amended as detailed above, be adopted for the most effective way of delivery policy, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008;**
  - (2) that the pay protection changes set out in paragraph 5.6 would also be amended in the Managing Change Policy, as set out in paragraph 1.2 and 5.6; and**
  - (3) A further report be presented at the next meeting of the Human Resources Committee to report on the further discussions identified.**

**MILEAGE ALLOWANCES - INCREASE AND REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources (agenda item no. 6) considering the increase in mileage allowances to 42.9p; noting the decision to review mileage expenses from April 2009 and agreeing the date of implementation would be 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 unless otherwise varied by members or by the Head of Paid Service delegated authority.

Issues raised in the public forum statements and comments made by members were noted and clarified by the HR officers as follows:

- The increase of 2.9 pence was an immediate gesture of good will pending a full review of mileage allowances. The level of increase was subject to amendment following a review.
- The introduction of a postcode to postcode system would be flexible to take account of any necessary deviations to taking a direct route. It would also prevent incidents of overclaiming.
- The NJC scheme had not been adopted
  - because no additional budget had been allocated to cover such a scheme and
  - there was a view from CMT that the NJC scheme still contained a profit margin, albeit reduced.
- The application of the HMRC rate resulted from a national agreement. A review of the mileage allowances would be an opportunity to consider a wide range of issues.
- CMT recommended that the Human Resources Committee accepted the recommendations in the report.
- Councillor Wright considered that there should be extra incentives to encourage employees to use smaller and more energy efficient vehicles. However, it was noted that this would be difficult to enforce. It was often the case that lower paid employees had bigger, older cars as these were cheaper to buy.
- The Chair expressed concern that deviation from the HMRC rate would involve additional tax liability both for the employee and the Council and felt an increase should not be made until a full review of the system had been made.
- The financial implications of the increase would result in an additional £140k per annum. It was unlikely that there would be any significant additional costs for payroll administration and P11D costs.

- The following recommendations were agreed by the committee as follows:

Resolution 1 - voting 3 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

Resolution 2 - all in favour

Resolution 3 - all in favour

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the mileage allowance be increased to 42.9p (up to 10,000 miles per annum);**
  - (2) that the decision to undertake a review of mileage expenses, to determine the council's practice regarding mileage allowances from April 2009 onwards, be noted; and**
  - (3) that the date of implementation be 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008, unless otherwise varied by the Head of Paid Service's delegated authority (paragraph 6.1 of the report refers).**

**HR**

**32.9/08**

## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources (agenda item no. 7) adopting the Work-Life Balance Policy with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

Issues raised in the public forum statements and comments made by members were noted and clarified by the HR Manager as follows:

- Paragraph 1.5 - to be amended to note the the statutory right for employees to request flexible work if they had a dependent under 6 or disabled child under 18 or were carers of certain adults.
- No employee would be forced into a Work-Life Balance Agreement. The process was entirely voluntary. This point would be emphasised to all employees.

**RESOLVED - that the Work-Life Balance Policy be adopted with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.**

## **INFORMATION ITEM**

**HR**

### **33.9/08 HOUSING CARETAKING REVIEW - BRIEFING NOTE**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Head of Human Resources (agenda item no. 8) on residential allowances: caretakers.

In response to the points raised in the public forum statement, the HR Advisor confirmed that the Housing Caretaking Review had suffered a delay. Negotiations with trade unions were ongoing. The review would not be completed by October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 as originally planned, completion would be January 2009 at the earliest but was more likely to be April 2009. No extension of the current arrangements beyond 1 April 2009 was anticipated.

**RESOLVED - that the briefing note and comments be noted.**

**HR**

### **34.9/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED - that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended).**

**HR**

### **35.9/08 EXEMPT MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING - HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 19TH AUGUST 2008**

**RESOLVED - that the exempt minutes of the special meeting of the Human**

**Resources Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

**HR  
36.9/08**

**EARLY RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF  
REDUNDANCY: NEIGHBOURHOOD AND HOUSING  
SERVICES**

(Exempt under paragraph 1 - information relating to any individual)

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources (agenda item no. 11) seeking approval for early retirement and the Committee subsequently resolved that

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) that the early retirement of the Director of Neighbourhood and Housing Services (N&HS) on the grounds of redundancy with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 be approved;**
  - (2) that additional pension benefits or augmented service in this case be not granted, as to do so would be contrary to the council's normal practice regarding enhanced pensions; and**
  - (3) Appendix B - to be amended as discussed.**

(The meeting ended at 3.25pm)

CHAIR