

AGENDA ITEM NO: 4

To : Members of the Human Resources Committee

Councillors : Steve Comer, John Bees, Richard Eddy, Popham,
Negus(subs:)

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HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8 October 2009

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AGENDA ITEM 5

SMART WORKING - HR COMMITTEE 8TH OCTOBER

UNISON would like the HR Committee to be aware that UNISON took part in a meeting on the 31st July at 10.00 am Romney House where the following issues were raised: risk assessments; budget implications of funding any relevant technology needed to resource mobile working; how the accommodation strategy savings of only £3million could be utilized to fund all aspects of SMART working.

At the moment our members are concerned that it appears to be purely a desk space saving exercise. None of our concerns raised on 31st July were responded to as agreed.

The HSC Finance Team requested that they undertook a pilot project to see if SMART working could be applied to them effectively, given the issues to be considered in the attached report from them.

The meeting on 31st July agreed to take this forward but failed to do so.

On the 23rd September the trade unions had a further meeting with Mark Williams (HR) to progress our concerns around SMART working. Mark agreed that Denise Brock would now undertake the tool kit work associated with SMART and work with the HSC finance team to apply it in practice.

Providing the work is endorsed by the HR committee and it is allowed to complete, UNISON will watch the outcome with interest.



Submission for Human Resources Committee Thursday 8 October 2009

Agenda item 5 Smart Working HR Policy

Unite the Union recognises the benefits for its members from implementing this Policy. However, not every ones personal situation/ household circumstances will lend themselves to smart working. So its good to see in paragraph 5.2 home working will not be made compulsory. The benefits should also contribute to the Authority being an attractive organisation to work for.

What is required is a proactive ICT Department who are able to implement the technological solutions required to make smart working successful. It is concerning that on page 46 the equality impact assessment tool kit the ICT needs have not yet been completed.

Agenda item 6 Market Supplements

Considering the size of the Authority and number of employees the amount of expenditure on market supplements is small. Market supplements should only be considered as a last resort after structural job design/evaluation alternatives have been looked into.

I believe a market supplement should only be considered following an unsuccessful round of recruitment which is different to the wording in 1.2(i).

Agenda item 7 Creation of post of Service Director, Neighbourhoods: Personnel Implications

Unite does question why a further second tier post in Neighbourhoods is being created when there has been a recent reduction of 1.8 FTE in this department due to Business Transformation? The line management ratios for this post are less than for the other second tiers in the department. To mitigate this we were told during consultation this post does have to be at a level in the organisation where it will have the authority to make things happen which might not be the case at third tier.

There is also an expectation the post will evolve over time so may have greater staff responsibility in the future.

Agenda item 8 Review of 1st - 3rd Tier Management Restructure

Unite wanted to highlight the length of time implementation of the senior management structure has taken with the third tier recruitment still not complete.

Officers not successful are being paid severance. The report says this is met from reserves for 1st and 2nd tier. As 3rd tier severance is being funded from Directorate budgets does this have any affect on the projected savings outlined on page 78 of the report?

Steve Paines

Convenor



7th October 2009

**GMB SUBMISSION TO BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL HR COMMITTEE
8TH OCTOBER 2009**

The GMB wish to make the following submission:

1 Protocol Relating to Stage 3 Hearing

The GMB thank the HR Committee for allowing the GMB to raise the issue at their last meeting and would like to add a further twist to this specific issue. The Stage 3 Grievance Hearing took place on Friday, 25th September. Only two out of the three councillors attended.

The panel were unable to make a decision on the day and the appellant was asked if he would like to meet to hear the decision or just receive written notification of the outcome. The appellant stated he would like to meet to hear the outcome. It was agreed a short meeting would be arranged week commencing 28th September.

To date we are still awaiting the outcome of the Stage 3 Hearing. Is this the new culture change the Council is adopting?

2 Monitoring of External Contracts

The GMB again have been left with no alternative but to bring another item to the HR Committee's attention due to failure to receive a response to our concerns from officers.

The GMB wrote to the Head of HR raising concerns about a range of issues concerning catering staff working in Bristol schools who were outsourced approximately two years ago. In the response it was stated the contractor had wished to change the workers hours before they took over the contract – but due to untrained staff had to continue with their existing hours.

Would the HR Committee clarify if it is the council's intention to change staff's terms and conditions prior to them being outsourced in order to facilitate the private contractor? It does appear that school catering staff can be treated less favourably than other workgroups when it comes to reducing their hours. Is this something the Council supports – attacking low paid women workers getting even less pay?

The GMB is therefore requests the HR Committee to ask for a monitoring report on all the outsourced contracts (grounds, cleaning and catering services) to see how the external service is matching the specification; turnover of staff; training (whether development/task specific); sickness rates; changes to staff's terms and conditions (comparable pay/terms and conditions to new staff to contract, issuing of company handbooks etc); frequency of trade union consultative meetings; health and safety training/personal injury.

All the things the council is required to undertake as the client and therefore this information should be readily available from the specific client teams.

3 **Agenda Item No 5 – SMART Working HR Policy**

The GMB welcome this policy if it is implemented in the spirit of the Worklife Balance Policy ethos – changes to working pattern/environment voluntarily agreed by both management and the employee.

However, we have been contacted by some concerned members who tell us that they will have to 'book' their desk on a weekly/monthly basis when they move to Somerfield even though they are 99.9% static office working – clearly they have misunderstood – but we are seeking clarification at this committee.

- 4 The Equalities Impact Assessment is comprehensive but the GMB is very concerned that within this document there appears to be a more than negative 'stereotype' towards 'older people' why should they resist change any more than their younger colleagues equally research shows there as just as many 'grey surfers' on the internet as other age groups. It may appear 'picky' but if this is going to be done properly then it should not support this type of stereotyping within the equalities groups – after all it could be deemed as prejudicial.

- 5 Where is the report on the Flexi Time Working – the GMB was under the impression a report was being brought to this committee – presumably this falls outside of the SMART Working HR Policy?

6 **Agenda Item No 6 – Market Supplement**

The GMB is seeking an assurance this will continue to be closely monitored and does not end up being a 'budget overspend' which results in staff at the lower levels within the department/council having to pay by job losses or attacks on their terms and conditions.

7 **Agenda Item No 7 – Creation of Post of Service Director**

The GMB are very concerned we were only invited last Friday (2nd October) to attend a meeting on Monday, 5th October to discuss this report. Because of the short notice we have not had an

opportunity to meet. Therefore we would like to raise the following concerns:

If £0.5m can be found in the 2010/11 budget so readily how much actual saving has been made to date through the 'council wide transformation programme' in order to pay for this? How is the council paying for all the consultants and 'interim managers' who are currently employed and how much is the **total** cost of these consultants and interim managers. We have repeatedly asked this question but if the HR Committee is not able to supply the GMB with this information we will go through the Freedom of Information Act format.

- 8 The GMB is not opposing the furtherance of democracy but would hope there is an undertaking from the Council that all these posts will be filled through the redeployment pool/internal appointments which can then be backfilled through the new opportunity pool.
- 9 **Agenda item 8 – Review of 1st and 3rd Tier Management Restructure**
The GMB is seeking clarification on two issues:
- 10 When a senior manager is unsuccessful (1st-3rd tier) some have become 'interim managers' surplus to the structure. Clearly we are keen for staff to retain employment but am intrigued how 'savings' are met – for example in Transformation one third tier manager was unsuccessful but is now an interim manger for two services one of which already has two fourth tier managers therefore there is a situation where there are two third tier managers (the successful postholder and the unsuccessful manager – the other unsuccessful manager is working in another department at a lower level), a similar situation exists in the City Development service – a second tier officer who was unsuccessful is now an interim manager overseeing the museum service review yet there is a second tier manager and third tier museum manger in post – how many more examples are there of this across the council?
- 11 I cannot see any reference in the appendices to show this – apologies if they are there – are they counted as savings or part of the actual structure? How much is the actual cost of interim managers.
- 12 The second issue is around the appeal against a reasonable offer. The GMB acknowledge that not everyone wishes to remain in paid employment and equally not everyone is offered a reasonable alternative post. The GMB is therefore seeking a written assurance from the HR Committee that everyone from 1st tier down will be treated in a consistent and equitable way in relation to what is deemed as a reasonable offer.

- 13 **Agenda Item No 9 – School Caretakers – Tied Accommodation**
The GMB welcomes this report as it firmly places the onus/liability on the VA school.

Rowena Hayward
Organisation Officer