

AGENDA ITEM NO: 4

To : Members of the Human Resources Committee

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

Copy to : Robert Britton, Service Director, Strategic HR
Will Godfrey, Strategic Director; Resources
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Linda Fitton, Rachel Falla, Sue Grist,

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 December 2009

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BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL – HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2009****COMMENTS OF UNISON****Agenda Item 6:- “Annual PMDS Report 2008 – 2009**

UNISON notes the contents of the report implies that under paragraph 3.5 (a), the City Council’s target for the year was set at achieving a 90 % target city wide of completed PMDS reviews. Under Appendix A of the report and summarised under paragraph 3.4 of the report, it indicates that 89.63 % of illegible employees had been scored. This would imply that the City Council had virtually achieved its target.

However, whilst the overall scores appear satisfactory, the results can be misleading if you analyse the results. For example, two departments achieved scores below the target, and one department (Health and Social Care) achieved only an average 73.1 % score, and did not achieve the average target on any of its services. The figures for Health and Social Care confirms to UNISON what many of its members have been stating to the union in that PMDS reviews are rarely completed in some services, despite management claims that these are always conducted.

Arguably though, the poorest returns took place in the Neighbourhoods Department under its Development Unite. Barely 40 % of the workforce had completed PMDS reviews and in the Transformation Department where only 2 staff out of 11 had completed PMDS reviews. No explanation is given in the report why these shortfalls occurred, or indeed the other failing sections highlighted under Appendix A.

If the PMDS reviews are to be taken seriously, then any review of the project must set out a clear action plan to be taken by departments/ services who do not achieve the targets expected to ensure that regular reviews are being conducted, and the staff receive any support required to avoid being subjected to action being taken against them where their performance is not achieving the standards expected.

Agenda Item 8:- Revisions to the Existing Corporate Flexi Time Scheme

UNISON supports the amended version of the policy and believes that it has needed strengthening in view of the occasional lapses in administration shown by managers when managing the scheme.

UNISON maintains the view that ultimately a manager must be prepared to refuse leave or occasional adjustments to working hours when requested by employees, if they hold the view that the service level cannot be sustained by granting the request. The revised policy now reaffirms this commitment.

The principals of the policy in respect of bandwidths and leave to be taken, remain as it was in the previous version. UNISON was surprised therefore, that the City Council’s senior management team called for only a 1 day flexi leave in each accounting period without seeking the views of their managers beforehand. Had they done so, it is possible that the survey conducted may not have been necessary. Clearly

the survey showed that the overwhelming majority of the managers not only felt that they could sustain their service by granting up to two days leave each period, but also the vast majority felt the proposals was a negative step.

UNISON believes that it will be in the interest of good industrial relations that where managers of the City Council believe a personnel policy should be amended because of service delivery, that it would be worthwhile to seek the views of their colleagues and staff beforehand etc.

Martin Jones
Branch Secretary
UNISON Bristol Branch

Tel. 0117 9405002

E-mail. Bristol.unison@bristolunison.co.uk



Submission for Human Resources Committee Thursday 17 December 2009

Agenda item 6 PMDS Scores 2008-09

This is an interesting report which presents the current situation relating to PMDS in the Authority. PMDS is an important tool to improving performance in the Authority so should be taken seriously.

Disappointingly 11% of the workforce don't currently receive a PMDS appraisal. This has knock on effects for other sections e.g. training who may not be asked to contribute to staff development for these employees. The areas of concern are mentioned in paragraph 3.6 and its difficult to understand that PMDS is not yet embedded in these areas when it has been in place for some years now.

Arrangements need to be put in place to help Departments reach 100% compliance.

Agenda item 8 Revisions to the Existing Corporate Flexi-Time Scheme

The background to this report is that the revised Flexitime Policy was adopted except for the number of flexi days that can be taken in a four week period.

As advised at the previous HR Committee, Unite received much feedback on the issue of reducing the number of flexi days from 2 to 1 each four week period. Unite considers the ability to be able to take 2 days assists Departments' ability to cope with peaks and troughs in workload. It promotes Work Life Balance and is a recruitment tool.

Any proposal to reduce to one day will affect morale and give employees no option but to make formal Work Life Balance requests and subsequent appeals if requests are turned down. There could be hundreds of formal applications presenting the Authority with a capacity issue processing this number of requests.

I believe the proposed wording of the Policy gives managers the authority to refuse a flexi-leave request based upon the needs of the service. Therefore, two flexi days per month should be specified and not up to two days. Giving Service Managers the responsibility of authorising the number of flexi days that can be taken at a local level is going to introduce inconsistencies across the Authority. This contradicts the purpose for reviewing the Flexi Policy as it states in paragraph 4.1 to overcome differences in the application of the scheme.

Steve Paines

Convenor



Submission to Human Resources Committee 17th December 2009
GMB wish to make the following comments

Agenda:

Item 5 – Grievances & Appeals

The GMB are disappointed that this report fails to report on the year the grievance or disciplinary was originally lodged. As members will be aware, the key concern of GMB is the length of time the process can take and that the duration can last from between 12 & 18 months.

Clearly this report does not address this issue.

Item 8 – Flexi Time Policy

Further to on going consultation, GMB wish to confirm that they support retaining the two days flexible option. Case by case reviews will ensure employers and employees are able to support work balance issues and business demands.

We are very pleased that management has acknowledged the significant impact on staff, if the scheme was reduced to one day.