

Notes of the Joint Consultative Panel

7th October, 2009, at 10.30 a.m.
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillor Stevenson (Chair);
Councillor M Robinson (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Chambers, O'Neill and Sutton.

Employees Side

**Association of Principal Fire Officers
(APFO)**

Vacancy;

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

M Fellows and R Jones;

Fire Officers Association

A Tranter;

UNISON

J Foster.

1/09 **Apologies**

The Panel noted that ACFO John Brown was no longer the Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO) representative and there was therefore a vacancy on the Panel.

2/09 **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor O'Neill declared a personal interest in that he is an out-of-trade member of the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU).

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3/09 **Terms of Reference of the JCP and Change to the Authority's Scheme of Delegations**

With reference to Minute No. 75/09 of the Authority (21st September 2009) the Panel noted its revised Terms of Reference; the Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC); and an amendment to the Scheme of Delegations.

The changes would support the implementation of an Employee Relations Policy, which had been jointly agreed by the employers and Trades Unions and approved by the Authority at the same meeting.

The Panel also noted the following dates for its future meetings:-

15th February, 2010
19th April, 2010

3/09 **Update on Progress of the Employee Relations Team**

The Panel noted the progress of the work of the Employee Relations Team.

The establishment of the Team was welcomed as a means to standardising and enhancing communications across departments and supporting managers.

4/09 **Protocol for Member-Employee Relations**

The Panel noted the Protocol for Member-Employee Relations which had been approved by the Standards Committee. The Protocol would support the further development of corporate governance standards within the Authority and ensure that there was clear guidance relating to areas such as behaviour, access to information, support given to members and press releases.

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5/09

Employee Assistance Service Update

The Panel received an update on the work of the Employee Assistance Service. The service complemented the existing Occupational Health and Well Being Service and provided confidential support, by various means, to employees and their immediate family members with personal or work related problems which were likely to affect their performance in the workplace.

The service was currently provided by Validium, an external organisation, however the contract was due to end on 30th November 2009.

Usage of the service currently stood at around 10% annually. Feedback from employees using the service had been excellent; however, disappointingly, there was still a lack of awareness amongst employees and some managers. Consequently, further work was being done to promote the service including manager briefings and mail shots circulated with payslips.

It was noted that Corporate Board had given approval to extend the contract for a further year until 30th November 2010 in order to assess the benefits of the service to employees and the organisation.

(The meeting ended at 11.04 am)

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