

Notes of the Joint Consultative Panel

15th February 2010, at 2.00 p.m.
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillor Stevenson (Chair);
Councillors Chambers, O'Neill and Sutton.

Employees Side

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

Vacancy;

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

M Fellows and M Round;

UNISON

J Foster.

Apologies: Councillor M Robinson (Vice-Chair) and Alan Tranter
Fire Officers' Association (FOA).

Declaration that the meeting was not quorate

The Clerk advised that, in the absence of a representative from FOA, the Panel was not quorate in respect of the business transacted under Minute No 3/10. No formal decisions could therefore be made and any recommendations or advice from the Panel to the Authority would be qualified by the inclusion of this statement. The Authority was not bound to take into account any advice so qualified.

1/10 **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).

Joint Consultative Panel
15th February 2010

2/10 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

3/10 **Code of Conduct Policy**

The Panel noted that the former Official Conduct Standing Order 2/12 had been amended and re-titled "Code of Conduct Policy". Significant changes had been made to the standing order to reflect national guidance. A consultation process had taken place and the trades unions had been given feedback on the responses received.

4/10 **Submission of Failure to Consult from the Fire Brigades' Union on replacement of stations' non-corporate furniture**

The Panel considered a Failure to Consult which had been registered by the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) on the subject of the replacement of stations' non-corporate furniture.

Under its Value for Money Priority within the Operations Plan Objectives for 2008/2009, the Service had commenced a review of furniture on fire stations with a view to replacing items deemed unfit for purpose with corporately procured items.

The FBU had expressed concern about the proposals and felt that the matter had required full consultation with operational staff before any action being taken to replace furniture.

The Service was of the view that the issue did not fall within the scope for "Consultation" as defined within section 2.4.2 of the Employee Relations Framework (previously referred to as the Employee Relations Policy). However, it had determined that it did fall within the scope of "General Information", as defined within section 2.4.1 of the Framework. The Service contended that it had provided sufficient information to stations on the proposals and an open dialogue had taken place, including the establishment of a working party and trials of sample furniture.

Joint Consultative Panel
15th February 2010

Having heard the views of both sides, and following an adjournment, the employer's side was of the opinion that the matter did not fall within the scope for "Consultation" as defined within section 2.4.2 of the Employee Relations Framework and was a matter that required the giving of "General Information", as defined within section 2.4.1 of the Framework. The employer's side felt that use of the word "consultation" in written communications by the Service had been misleading and requested that the Head of Human Resources submit a report to the next meeting identifying the lessons learned from the process.

Resolved to recommend to the Chief Fire Officer:-

- (1) that the review/replacement of furniture on fire stations is not a matter requiring consultation as defined within section 2.4.2 of the Employee Relations Framework;
- (2) that the Head of Human Resources submit a report to the next meeting of the Joint Consultative Panel identifying lessons learned from the information giving process on this matter.

(The meeting ended at 2.20pm following an adjournment between 1.25 and 2.05pm.)

*Contact Officer: Stephnie Hancock
Democratic Services Unit
Sandwell MBC
0121 569 3189*