

MEMBERS/TRADES UNIONS JOINT CONSULTATION AND SAFETY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 December 2013, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30pm.

PRESENT:

Employers representatives: Councillors Copping and Kinson (Chairman).

Trades Unions' representatives: Mr Crump, Mr Foster and Mr Lynch.

Also present: Peter Dixon (Civic and Committee Services Officer) and Andrew Jones (Deputy Chief Executive).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrott and Kirton, Mr Chapleo, Chris Elliott (Chief Executive) and Alan Richardson (Health and Safety Advisor).

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2013 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Panel noted that the implications of the proposed move out of Riverside House would be addressed under a separate agenda item.

Responding to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive clarified that a tender had gone out for an options appraisal to be carried out on Leisure Services. However, no other decisions had been taken and there was no predetermined intention to outsource.

14. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Panel was pleased to note a report from the Health and Safety Advisor which stated that there had been no lost time or reportable accidents since before April 2013.

15. PUBLIC SERVICE TRADE UNIONS REQUEST FOR A £1 PER HOUR PAY INCREASE 2014/15

Mr Foster circulated documents produced by the Trade Unions explaining why a pay increase was so important. Local government staff pay did not compare well with the private sector. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services had requested that the paperwork be distributed and intended to consider the situation more closely in the spring.

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The Panel noted that such a pay rise would have a significant impact on the Council's budget.

16. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WARWICK UNISON AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS

Mr Foster informed the Panel that Unison had approached the Council's three contractors to discuss pay and conditions for their employees. As a result of talks, two of the contractors had agreed to adhere to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and to the national pay award. However, despite Mr Foster having sent emails and letters, there had been no communication from the third contractor since April 2013. This contractor was paying its staff just above the minimum wage and Unison felt there was a lot of room for improvement.

Unison had arranged to meet with the new Leader of the Council in the near future. The Panel suggested that Unison's concerns should be discussed with the Leader, with a view to the Council bringing some pressure to bear on the contractor, if necessary.

17. INFORMATION ON PROPOSED MOVE OF WDC FROM RIVERSIDE HOUSE TO ANOTHER PROPERTY

The Deputy Chief Executive reported on the current situation in relation to the proposed move of the Council's headquarters. He advised the Panel that the aim was to move to a new building by April 2016. However, given that the Council currently had a good level of reserves, this did not have to be a definitive cut-off date.

A couple of sites were currently under consideration and it was intended that Executive would be asked to approve the final location early in 2014. The Panel noted that a communication strand with the unions was being set up in order to keep them involved. The Chief Executive intended to give staff a further update on developments during December.

Mr Lynch flagged up the point that Unison had some concerns over a lack of car parking if, as the union believed, there should be a move towards more hot-desking and staff working from home.

18. MEMBER BEHAVIOUR AND THE EFFECT ON STAFF

Mr Crump raised the point that on a number of occasions over the past couple of years it had been necessary for Members to apologise to officers. He pointed out a perceived inconsistency, in that while an apology from a Member was considered sufficient, it was likely that much more serious disciplinary action would have been carried out if an officer had offended a Councillor.

(The Deputy Chief Executive left the meeting prior to consideration of this item.)

(The meeting ended at 5.15 pm)