

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Flintshire County Council held in County Hall Mold on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

**PRESENT:**

**Councillor: Q.R.H. Dodd (Chairman)**

**Councillor: C. Legg (Vice-Chairman)**

Councillors: L. A. Aldridge, K. Armstrong-Braun, J. B. Attridge, S. R. Baker, D. Barratt, G. H. Bateman, R. C. Bithell, C. S. Carver, Mrs. J. C. Cattermoul, E. G. Cooke, D. L. Cox, P. J. Curtis, Mrs. A. J. Davies-Cooke, C. J. Dolphin, B. Dunn, E. F. Evans, J. E. Falshaw, F. Gilmore, R. J. T. Guest, Miss A. M. Halford, R. G. Hampson, G. Hardcastle, P. G. Heesom, H. T. Howorth, R. Hughes, G. James, Mrs. C. M. Jones, Mrs N. M. Jones, Mrs. S. Jones, R. P. Macfarlane, D. I. Mackie, Mrs. D. L. Mackie, Mrs N. M. Matthews, Mrs. A. Minshull, W. Mullin, E. W. Owen, M. J. Peers, P. R. Pemberton, N. Phillips, I. B. Roberts, A. P. Shotton, Mrs C. A. Thomas, D. E. Wisinger and A. Woolley.

**APOLOGIES:**

**Councillors:** Mrs. R. Dolphin, Mrs. C. A. Ellis, Miss E. V. Gay, M. Higham, Mrs. N. Humphreys, H. D. Hutchinson, H. T. Isherwood, R. B. Jones, Mrs. H. J. McGuill, M. A. Reece, H. G. Roberts, N. R. Steele-Mortimer and Ms H. Yale.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Lifelong Learning, Director of Environment, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance, Interim Assistant Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development), Assistant Director (ICT and Customer Services), Single Status Project Manager and Head of Committee, Member and Electoral Services.

**90. PRAYERS**

The Reverend Anthapurusha conducted prayers at the commencement of the meeting.

**Chairman's Announcement**

The Chairman referred to the collection made at the Christmas lunch, the previous day, which had raised £94.00 and thanked Members for their support.

Councillor L. A. Aldridge referred to the apologies submitted for the meeting and expressed his disappointment on the number of Executive Members who were absent.

**91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The County Legal and Democratic Services Officer referred to the business to be considered on the agenda which related to many employees of the Authority. He advised those Members who had a close personal association with any County Council employee to declare a personal nor prejudicial Interest as the report was a general report without the impact of the proposed pay and grading model on individuals being discussed and asking the Council to consider to a provisional position. If the debate developed into specific areas and interests did become prejudicial, the County Legal and Democratic Services Officer would give further advice at that stage.

Councillors L. A. Aldridge, J. B. Attridge, C. J. Dolphin, R. P. MacFarlane, N. Phillips, A. P. Shotton and Mrs. C. A. Thomas all declared personal interests in Agenda Item No. 4 – Single Status – Proposed Pay and Agreement for Green Book Staff in Flintshire – Provisional Employer Position.

**92. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following agenda item as it was considered to be exempt by virtue of paragraph 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

**93. SINGLE STATUS – PROPOSED PAY AND AGREEMENT FOR GREEN BOOK STAFF IN FLINTSHIRE – PROVISIONAL EMPLOYEE POSITION**

The Chief Executive introduced his joint report with the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Head of Finance and Head of Legal and Democratic Services. The purpose of the report was to seek a provisional employer position prior to entering final negotiations with the trade unions with the objective of implementing a new pay and reward model on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. He outlined the proposed proceedings for consideration of the report, which would be a presentation similar to that made at two workshops the previous week. This would be followed by a session for Members to raise issues and seek clarification. The meeting would then provide further information on the negotiating position with the trade unions prior to a final debate and the invitation to the Councillors, as the collective employing body, to offer advice.

The Chief Executive introduced the officers which included Annette Facer who was the Single Status Project Manager. He reminded Members that this was a highly confidential issue and Members acting as the employing body could not disclose or discuss any matters outside the Council Chamber as this could influence negotiations with the trade unions.

The Chief Executive outlined the reasons for convening this special meeting of the County Council which was to inform the County Council on Single Status and to seek a provisional employer position. The objective of Single Status was to introduce a new harmonised pay model which Annette Facer would outline in her presentation, and it was hoped, could be agreed with the trade unions. Accordingly, the officers required a provisional position from the County Council to support and enable final discussions to be held with the trade unions in the New Year. He informed the Council that Annette Facer, as the Single Status Project Manager, had been the lead negotiator with the trade unions until these later stages when the statutory officers, which were the Chief Executive, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance would now be involved in the final negotiations.

The Interim Assistant Director (Human Resources and Organisational Development) referred to the presentations made at the workshops held the previous week which would now be repeated for those Members who had not been able to attend. Single Status was a new pay and grading structure which harmonised the pay and conditions of service of former manual staff and former Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical staff (APT&C). The 1997 National Agreement (the Green Book) required all local authorities to develop a local Single Status Pay and Grading Agreement. This provided an opportunity to simplify and modernise the Council's pay structure. There were three overriding factors which needed to be balanced which were legality, affordability and acceptability.

The Interim Assistant Director then referred to Single Status and Equal Pay and emphasised the importance of keeping these separate. Single Status was about the future pay structure which had to be "equality proof;" Equal Pay claims related to the current pay structure which was what Single Status would replace. Single Status included all former manual (White Book) and former APT&C (Purple Book) staff and included schools based Green Book staff as well as Flintshire County Council staff. There were some 6,000 employees included but teachers, Soulbury staff, second tier officers, youth and community and craft (Red Book) staff were excluded. The guiding principles while carrying out the work were partnership, openness and transparency, equality, realism, acceptability and objectivity.

The strategic goals were to support service improvement and customer focus and to provide fair pay as one element of a reward package and to equality proof the pay structure. Reference was then made to the current arrangements and details were provided on the various grades, pay scales, pay rates, overtime rates, extra duty payment rates and local agreements.

The Single Status Project Manager then outlined the work of the project which had included analysis, evaluation and consistency checking of 1,312 Council jobs and 1,125 school based jobs. This included the development of a new pay and grading structure in partnership with the trade unions, and a job evaluation rank order of scores to appropriate pay and grading structure. She outlined the pay and grading design options and their affordability.

On communications with employees, there had been strict confidentiality requirements for all those working on the project and confidentiality had been maintained. An extensive programme of employee communications was being planned and this would be followed by individual result letters. In addition, a programme was being planned to provide practical support to those employees whose remuneration would be reduced.

The important negotiating issues were the investment in the pay model, pay protection, back pay and transitional points. The employer options for both agreement or no agreement with the trade unions were outlined. The strategic considerations included the size of the pay bill, the sustainability and affordability of the pay model, the impact of negotiations on non-recurrent costs, the modernisation of working practices and managing impacts on the workforce.

At this juncture, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on the presentation so far. Officers then answered a number of questions raised by Members.

The Chief Executive referred to the negotiations with the trade unions with the aim of reaching an agreement. As set out in paragraph 2.05 of the report, a balance had to be achieved across three critical factors of legality, affordability and acceptability. A final position had not been reached on the negotiations and there was an initial understanding with the trade unions on pay protection.

On the issues of back pay, and transitional points, there was no agreement. In conclusion, the Chief Executive also drew Members attention to the letter they had received from the trade unions and provided answers on the issues which were challenged.

The Head of Finance then highlighted the financial issues and referred to the base budget provision, the current spend on Green Book pay and proposed Single Status spend on Green Book pay which at top of the grade represented an increase of 11.6% on current spend. The Welsh Assembly had included an amount of 1.5% of the pay bill in each of the financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 in the revenue settlement. The Council's strategy had been to earmark this money for Single Status and Equal Pay and had resulted in an additional £4.1m in the base budget and a reserve of £8.7m. She then outlined together with the total payroll costs for Green Book and non Green Book employees under the proposed pay and grading model, with the proposed Green Book recurring costs which exceeded the base budget from 2012/13 (which was year 4). The proposed costs of pay protection, development and training costs were outlined. In closing she referred to further additional recurring costs from increased employer rate contributions to the pension fund which would be dealt with at the next actuarial evaluation in 2010 as this could not be quantified at the present time.

The Chief Executive then referred to the base budget provision to fund the new ongoing cost of the pay bill at 2007/08 prices. The previous Council,

in the interests of prudence and transparency, had set aside cumulative revenue support grant funding to invest in a modernised pay structure and to settle any successful Equal Pay claims.

The Single Status Project Manager then referred to the impact on employees in year 1 and outlined the number and percentage of those that would gain from the new Single Status, those that would remain unchanged and those that would be adversely affected, the impact on those on basic pay and maximum of grade, and the impact on bonus earners and loss of full school holiday payment. In conclusion, she referred to the need for an understanding on the reserves set aside to meet the outcomes of Single Status; the justification for transitional points, the duration of pay protection and whether back pay was justified and affordable.

Following a short adjournment Members were given a further opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions on the information provided by the officers.

Councillor P G Heesom moved that delegation be given to the Chief Executive to enter final negotiations with the trade unions with the objective of securing an agreement which met the three requirements of legality, acceptability and affordability and this was duly seconded.

Councillor A. P. Shotton supported the proposition and referred to the issue of equal pay protection and single status reserves; if they were treated as an entirety it would assist in negotiations with the trade unions and provide increased flexibility.

On being put to the vote, the proposition was agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That delegation be given to the Chief Executive to enter into final negotiations with the objective of securing an agreement with the trade unions which met the three requirements of legality, acceptability and affordability.

**94. DURATION OF MEETING**

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 4.05 p.m.

**95. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the press in attendance prior to the resolution to exclude the press and public.

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**Chairman**

**SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

<b>FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DATE: 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008</b>
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<b>MEMBER</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MIN. NO. REFERS</b>
Councillors: L. A. Aldridge, J. B. Attridge, C. J. Dolphin, R. P. MacFarlane, N. Phillips, A. P. Shotton and Mrs. C. A. Thomas	SINGLE STATUS – PROPOSED PAY AND AGREEMENT FOR GREEN BOOK STAFF IN FLINTSHIRE – PROVISIONAL EMPLOYEE POSITION	93