

## **REPORT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

(Meeting held on 15 March 2001)

### **1. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT TEMPLATES – BRIEFING REPORT (REPORT C) (MINUTE NO. 20).**

The Committee noted the folder of employment contract definitions and templates which had been produced to meet the Council's employment policy. The contracts folder would ensure that all directorates were working from the same set of best practice guidelines, and that every employee received the most appropriate contract for their job.

### **2. MANAGEMENT ADVICE NOTES – RE-LAUNCH (REPORT D) (MINUTE NO 21).**

The Committee was advised that the folder of Management Advice Notes (MANS) had been revised to take account of changes in legislation and best practice since they were last issued. The folders of Management Advice Notes had been given to all Heads of Service, Directors, each Recreation Centre and a representative of each of the Employee Side Trade Unions. The Advice Notes would also be shortly available on Forestnet for managers and employees to read. This would include hypertext links to other relevant Advice Notes and to other Personnel products, such as the Employee Handbook.

The Employee side remarked on the usefulness of the Management Advice Notes, which provided a very helpful reference source.

### **3. CAPABILITY, DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES. (MINUTE NO 22)**

The Committee was advised that it was timely to review the Council's procedures for capability, disciplinary and grievance issues. In addition to the new Guidance Codes which had been issued by ACAS, it would be opportune to take account of the experience of the managers and the Employee Side's representatives who had operated the procedures, in order to make them as helpful as possible. A Working Group, which included Employee Side representatives, had already been established as a way of involving all Directorates and taking the process forward. Work was well forward with the disciplinary procedures, and was progressing with capability; while the grievance procedure would be prepared last. It was expected that a report would be brought to the Committee in June.

Members welcomed the work being done to progress these procedures and noted that this provided a good example of the Employer and Employee Sides working together.

**4. MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (REPORT E) (MINUTE NO. 23).**

The Committee received a written review of the Management Development Programmes that had been run in 2001. These had proved extremely successful and there were clear benefits to be gained from running them again. Members were advised of the key findings. It was felt that the key objectives of the courses had been met. The Participants had valued working in a group, with continuity of membership and drawn from different directorates. This had provided a valuable resource. The participants had also supported the format of training, the variety of trainers used and the amount of work required outside the course.

It was noted that the Supervisory and Middle Management Development Courses could be run again, with only minor modifications. In particular, the Middle Management Course should include some "harder" skill areas, such as Project Management and Performance Measurement.

There seemed to be little benefit in running the Senior Managers' Course in the same format in 2001/02. Last year's course had not been over-subscribed and it was unlikely that, if run again on the same format, it would attract sufficient participants. It was therefore intended to run a series of Master Classes on selected topic areas. This would allow senior and middle managers to select those topic areas which were of greatest relevance to them.

The Employee Side warmly welcomed the success of the Management Development Programmes which had been run in 2001. They regretted that there seemed to be little demand for the Senior Managers' Course that had been offered, but hoped that the Master Classes would provide a suitable development opportunity that would be well used.

The Employee Side suggested that, in addition to having heard from representatives of the delegates on each course, it would also be beneficial to hear presentations from the trainers on their experiences. It was agreed that an attempt would be made to ask one or more of the trainers involved to give a presentation to the next meeting.

The Committee supported the organisation of Management Development Programmes for 2001/02, as described in Report E to the Committee.

**5. PEOPLE (HR) STRATEGY (FIRST DRAFT)(REPORT F) (MINUTE NO. 24).**

The Committee received the first draft of the People (Human Resources) Strategy which was being developed. Over the week following the meeting of the Committee the consultation process on the Strategy would start in earnest, with circulation to the Personnel Information Network members. It would also be taken to the Corporate and Finance Portfolio Performance and Review Panel for their views.

Members discussed the development of the Strategy and considered that, in order to express an informed and constructive view, Members should have a half day workshop on this issue. Because of existing commitments, this could not be held until the middle of May. As a consequence, Corporate Management Team would be requested to accept a slippage in the production of the final report, in order to let such workshop take place.

**6. SINGLE STATUS (MINUTE NO. 25).**

The Committee was advised that a pre-meeting had been arranged to discuss single status issues and would be held on 21 March 2001. Additional meetings had been arranged in April to take the process forward, and to allow full participation from Union representatives.

**7. PAY NEGOTIATIONS (MINUTE NO 26).**

The Committee was advised that the Employer's Side nationally had offered a 3% pay increase for 2001. This was subject to consultations and it was expected that the Trade Unions and Employer's side would meet again on 20 March.

The Committee was advised that Local Authorities in Scotland had accepted a 14.2% pay award over a 4 year period. Details of the pay award were circulated at the meeting.

It was agreed that the national pay negotiations would be watched closely, and with some interest.

**8. SAFETY GROUP MINUTES (REPORT G) (MINUTE NO. 28).**

The Committee noted items of interest that had been discussed by the Safety Group at their meeting held on 1 March 2001. In answer to questions, Members were advised that the storage of documents was a major problem, both logistically, and from a health and safety point of view (Minute 78(a) refers). A number of options were being examined, including the microfiling of essential documents and the disposal of others.

It was noted that document imaging processing (DIP) had proved very valuable in the Revenues Section and been very successful in reducing the amount of paper which was stored. The introduction of DIP systems on a corporate basis was being examined as part of the E-Governance Strategy, which would help with paper storage in the longer term.

Members were concerned to learn that the Council employee who had suffered a needle stab injury. The employee was now waiting for final results of blood tests. The issue had been taken up with the Doctor's surgery involved, but it had not been possible to get an undertaking that there could be no recurrence of this incident.

With respect to the Stress Audit, the Committee was advised that the Stress Audit questionnaires had been distributed to the Finance Directorate. Many lessons had been learnt from this initial phase. It was hoped that the majority of feedback would be received within the next two weeks and the project could then be developed and rolled out to other directorates.

**Mr J Warren  
CHAIRMAN**