

# Minutes of Prospect BEC Meeting 6th February 2006, Elm Bank Hotel, York

## Present

Tony Cousins (TC)  
Iain Kirk (IK)  
Glen Brearley (GB)  
Marcus Sangster (MS)  
Ian Willoughby (IW)  
Ian Tubby  
Keith Miller

## 1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 were accepted.

## 2. Matters arising

### 2.1 *Culture change*

**Discharged**

### 2.2 *Passenger mileage supplement*

**Discharged**

2.3 *Alice Holt site and building review* - carry this issue forward to the next meeting.

2.4 *Closure of MTC Ae* - carry forward both points highlighted in the minutes of the 8th December 2005 BEC meeting.

- MS to initiate cross union discussion mobility with ES, as Prospect believes that the enforceability of mobility clauses depends on particular circumstances and should not be taken as generally applicable.

**Action MS**

- With the assistance of CF, MS to raise the issue of consistent application of remote working arrangements with ES. Currently FC policy, such as it is, is not applied consistently throughout the country e.g. why is it appropriate for many FC England staff, but not staff faced with the prospect of relocating from MTC, or FR staff. A consistent remote working policy may make enforcement of mobility clause unnecessary, with benefits to the individual staff and cost savings for the organisation. Also, the possibility of remote working is likely to be a factor that reduces the legal force of mobility clauses.

**Action MS / CF**

**2.5 FR Technical Support review** - This matter is being dealt with via the FR NOC. IT reported that one Prospect member is likely to be made redundant as a result of this review. The way in which FR management have handled the situation has not been satisfactory. FR NOC have yet to see a compelling case supporting the proposed redundancies, however the Prospect member has become so disillusioned with FR that they are willing to explore redundancy options. The member is currently waiting for details of their redundancy package (having request the information some weeks ago). The pb 6s affected by this round of job losses have received their packages in recent weeks. FR will fund redundancies via their 2006/07 budget as FR management had been unable to convince FC or Defra to provide financial support. IT will provide BEC with an update following the next FR NOC meeting to be held on 16th February. IT will ask TUS secretary why this issue is being dealt with by FR NOC rather than Staff Council.

**Action: IT**

**2.6 BIP** - It was noted that FC DG appeared uninterested with this process and that seems to have fizzled out.

**Discharged**

**2.7 Bullying** - carry this issue forward to the next meeting

- BEC welcomed progress, but further action required, particularly on whether or not existing policy could be revised to take best practice in other organisations into account, specifically whether or not an informal stage could be introduced to allow resolution before formal, often highly confrontational and blame orientated procedures are initiated.

**Action TC / CF**

**2.8 Pay**

**Discharged**

**2.9 Pensions** - Peter Gosling has agreed to remain the branch 'Pensions Rep.' during 2006. Peter will also update delegates of the current situation during the forthcoming ADC. It was noted that recent progress made regarding retirement age was a 'stay of execution' rather than a lasting commitment by government to leave terms and conditions of our pensions as they are.

**2.10 ADC** - Arrangements all in place

**Discharged**

**2.11 HR / TUS interaction** –

**Discharged**

**2.12 Travel and subsistence** - BEC was pleased to note that HR had apologised for the way in which the current T&S rates had been 'negotiated' with TUS. The apology had been recorded in minutes of the latest Core Group

meeting. Points 2 and 3 from item 9 of the minutes of the 6th December BEC meeting are to be carried forward to the next BEC meeting.

- Dissatisfaction over failure to increase some allowances such as Friends and Family subsistence allowance.

**Action MS**

- Income tax limits should be a matter for individual employees, and for management to use them as an excuse not to increase allowances is a red herring.

**Action MS**

**2.13 Membership** - IK reported that there are currently 289 Prospect members in the FC. BEC asked if it was possible to create section specific and 'all members' distribution lists on Outlook for use by BEC members. IK agreed to look into this.

**Action: IK**

IK had also drafted a note on membership for Bark.

IK reported that a recent branch 'Health Check' had shown that the structure and activism of the branch was generally in order.

### **3. Any other business**

BEC discussed motions drafted by members for the forthcoming ADC.

### **4. Date of next meeting**

9th May 2006