



Minutes

31st Wales Staff Council Meeting
Wednesday 29th June 2011
National Office, Aberystwyth

Official Side

Trefor Owen, Director Wales (Chair)
Peter Garson, Head of Estate Management
Steve Burton, HR Business Partner
Chloe Gough (Secretariat)

FCTU Side

Chris Tucker
Tony Egan
John Williams

Guests

Jean Lindsay, Director HR
Alison McSheaffery, Head of HR Services

Apologies:

Antony Griffiths

Previous Minutes

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011 were agreed as a true record with one amendment to improve accuracy: In paragraph 8, replace 'pool' with 'assignments group'.

Matters Arising

2. Para 11. Action carried forward. Steve Burton (SB) and Antony Griffiths (AG) to review the consistency of how facility time is expressed in FJPs, and to ensure the time allocation is correct by September 2011.
3. Para 7. Action carried forward. SB to share the revised staff resourcing plan with Chris Tucker (CT) by 15 July 2011.
4. Para 14. Action to be kept open and reviewed at the next meeting on 5 October. Jean Lindsay (JL) offered to share HR's six-month evaluation of EAP with FCTU.

Action JL

Director's Report

5. Trefor Owen added a verbal update to his written report, informing the group of his two meetings with the new Minister, John Griffiths AM. He went on to explain that Nicol Sinclair had taken over from Clive Thomas for one year as part of his

Staff Council

leadership development, to allow Clive to work on the Single Environment Body and Natural Environment Framework projects.

6. CT requested information on the number of hectares lost to fire damage, and the effectiveness of the new system as these were the most severe fires since the change of system. PG was in the process of collecting this data, but estimated 400 hectares in Coed y Cymoedd, 200 hectares in Llanymddyfri and 40 hectares in Coed y Mynydd. Not all of these areas would need restocking, however. There was no evidence that moving away from fire duty rotas had affected the number of fires in Coed y Cymoedd. The Estates Management Group would confirm actions required on this matter at their July meeting.

Priority Posting Pool and G&R Staff

7. SB confirmed that all unit managers had been visited by Liz Cookson and were aware of the new priority posting pool process. CT explained there was confusion among some staff, especially in G&R, over the six-month lead time. SB confirmed staff joined the PPP six months before their post finished however, where appropriate, this could be extended. TO asked the FCTU to let him know if people weren't clear on the process. **Action FCTU**
8. SB went on to explain that he was meeting with Glastir in a few weeks to discuss their staff requirements, which he would share with FCTU. **Action SB**

Voluntary Exit Scheme

9. John Williams (JW) said that staff did not know who to ask for help to complete the voluntary exit spreadsheet. JL said staff should be directed to George Prior or Sheena Harkess because of their expert pension knowledge, and confirmed that HR would give people as much support as they needed.
10. TO explained that the voluntary exit scheme did not have the formal flexibility to provide career development for staff in Wales because the scheme was funded by Defra and was purely to help reduce the headcount in England.

Bilingual Skills Strategy

11. CT updated the group on his meeting with HR on the communication strategy, and he reported progress on devising the key messages to answer the concerns of staff. TO thanked CT for his involvement, and asked for the feedback to continue.
12. In answering Tony Egan's concern over in-coming staff from England not speaking Welsh, TO explained that he had identified the potential implications to the Bilingual Skills Strategy, and would look carefully at the level of Welsh competence required for each post being transferred into.

Staff Council

Assignments Group

13. SB explained that the number of applications to the assignments group had been low because of the temporary nature of the posts, which led to uncertainty the end of the three-year period. The Assignments Group would be re-launched as a permanent team, probably in 2012, when a larger amount of work had been identified.

Business Units Review

14. TE asked for an update on the review, explaining that BU staff were keen to know what opportunities might be available in the future. PG explained that the business case would be looked at holistically, including the management capacity required if services were contracted out. A decision would be made in autumn 2011.
15. As for opportunities, PG had identified the availability of a number of supervisor roles over the next few years. He planned to test the level of interest and the skills available, then put a development plan in place. PG agreed to send a note out in July to inform people of future supervisor availability, and to organise a WHaM open day showing what the job would entail. **Action PG**

Single Environmental Body (EDO)

16. TO explained that FCW had increased its involvement in this project to ensure its voice was heard. The business case was ongoing until August so no decisions had been made. The implementation workstream (pensions, IT, terms and conditions etc.) would be looked at last, after all of the other workstreams had reported back (half had done so already).
17. CT explained the unions were fully engaged with this issue, but frustrated at the lack of good information coming from the Welsh Government project team. Members could not make a decision until they had an understanding of it, but did not know what it entailed.
18. PG and TO asked FCTU to continue to report back:
 - If the issue affected facility time, and by how much;
 - On the mood of their members (any worries and questions they had).**Action FCTU**

Staff Survey

19. SB gave advanced notice that the staff survey would take place in September 2011, using both electronic and paper versions to increase staff participation. JL

Staff Council

highlighted the FCTU's role in explaining the benefits of the survey to their members. TO offered to send out a joint reminder with the FCTU.

Organisation Change

20. Sally Tansey was defining each of the six workstreams and a planning workshop had been held. TO continued to inform staff of progress on this and the SEB in his monthly update, which offered a way for staff to feedback their thoughts.

Pay 2011

21. JL explained that the pay claim had been submitted to the three governments. HR would speak to the FCTU when all three governments had responded.

Date of Next Meeting: 5 October 2011

Distribution:

Silvan House

Tim Rollinson, Director General

Jean Lindsay, Director of Human Resources

Alison McSheaffrey, Head of HR Services

Lynn Calder, Human Resources

Allan MacKenzie, FCTU Secretary

Sue Gillingwater, FCTU Operations & Communications Manager

Wales

All staff on electronic mail.

Cost Centre Managers to ensure that copies are made available to staff not on electronic mail