

# Birmingham Law Society Employment Law Committee Meeting

Tuesday 12 July 2011 at 8.45 am

held at the offices of:

Wragge & Co, 55 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 2AS

## MINUTES

### 1. Attendance

1.1 Those present were Mike Hibbs (Chair), Ranjit Dhindsa, Richard Steer, Andrew Cox, Roger Sheppard, Tracy Worthington, Victoria Garrad and Alan Jones.

1.2 Apologies were received from Martin Chitty, Tim Jones, Fergal Dowling, Richard Santy, Jaspal Singh, Victoria Duddles, Trevor Allsop and Linda Jones.

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The Minutes of the last meeting on 14 June 2011 were approved. The only matter arising was to note that the acting Regional Employment Judge had completed his service and the new Regional Employment Judge for Birmingham was Regional Employment Judge Fiona Monk. The Committee agreed to invite her to the committee meeting in October, failing that November. It was noted in passing that the new Regional Employment Judge for Bristol was Jonathan Parkin, formally a Birmingham Employment Judge.

### 3. Review of 2011 BLS Equality Act Seminar

3.1 It was generally agreed that this was a disappointing seminar both in terms of numbers and in terms of the presentations given. Nonetheless our thoughts would be expressed to the speakers for their efforts. Victoria Garrad was thanked for Gateley's kind hospitality and Glenda Rogers for her sterling efforts in organising the event. It was agreed that if we were to repeat this event in 2012, there would need to be some significant differences. It was recognised that in terms of training we would be competing with the commercial providers of whom there were many in Birmingham and that there was little point in doing that. However, using high profile speakers on a relevant practical topic would be of value. It was envisaged that there would be something from the government in relation to Tribunal reform for next year were that to be the case a speaker from the judiciary in the Employment Appeal Tribunal or perhaps the President of Employment Tribunals would be likely to attract a sizeable and relevant audience. It would be likely to be of value to members.

### 4. Consultation Papers

4.1 Some considerable debate was engaged in relation to the draft responses to the consultation papers on the modern workplaces. Flexible parental leave. There was a burden to SME's and that should be reflected in the answer to Q10. At Q15 12 was thought more appropriate for schooling reasons. Q18 the consensus was no and at Q19(6) was preferred rather than adding further insight. Flexible working. The consensus was that our views were a little less radical than the draft and Ranjit agreed to amend to reflect this. Working time. The draft was approved despite debate over Q8 where the opposite view was to be expressed. Martin (Connie Cliff), Ranjit, Andrew and Victoria Duddles were all thanked for their considerable efforts in preparing initial drafts for us to debate.

The responses to the consultation papers needed to be submitted by 8 August although in practical terms they need to be submitted before that date in view of commitments of members of the Committee. Victoria Garrad agreed to collate the responses and make sure that they were submitted in time. It was noted that the responses needed some amendments for consistency as well as the practical amendments that had to take place as a result of the Committee's intense discussions. Mike Hibbs agreed to make minor amendments to the flexible parental leave consultation paper as requested. Ranjit and Andrew agreed to make amendments to their respective papers. There were no amendments to Victoria Duddles' paper on equal pay although Roger Sheppard agreed to contact Victoria if there were any further comments he wanted to make following a meeting on the subject that he had later on 12 July.

- 4.2 All those preparing amendments were to get their amendments to Victoria Garrad by no later than 29 July 2011.
5. Venue for next meeting on 13 September 2011.
- 5.1 The next meeting will take place on **13 September** at Shakespeares, Somerset House, Temple Street.
6. Any other business
- 6.1 It was agreed that Mike Hibbs would contact Robert Smith to confirm whether he intended to continue as a member of the Committee given his absence over several past meetings and if not, whether he had a colleague at Thompsons who would wish to take his place.
- 6.2 It was noted that Liverpool Law Society were offering their own webinars however again it was recognised that Liverpool had little commercial competition for training activities.