

Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories

MERGER WORKING PARTY REPORT

2/79

The second meeting of the AL/RL Merger Working Party was held on 19 September 1979. This report outlines the main subjects discussed and conclusions reached.

1. Matters arising from 1st meeting

(i) Staff Questionnaires

It was agreed that, at future meetings, the Working Party would review the information provided by the Non Industrial staff, who completed questionnaires, on such matters as housing and travelling arrangements following transfer to Chilton. The Head of the Merger Unit and Chairman of Staff Side would discuss the information required.

Industrial staff at Ditton Park had not yet been invited to complete similar questionnaires. They were being seen individually by a member of the Merger Unit to discuss personal queries about the transfer as it might affect them and a questionnaire would be circulated in due course if it seemed necessary.

(ii) Transfers

It was reported that following further consideration by Central Office, some improvement in transfer terms to enable a passenger supplement to be paid for travel in the Chilton area whilst looking for accommodation might be possible. The details would be the subject of consultation centrally between the Official and Staff Sides.

It was confirmed that the payment of interest on bridging loans associated with stage payments on property being built could not be paid. However, advances of salary for house purchase where justified, could be paid early and used to assist in meeting stage payments.

(iii) Redundancy

The TU representatives were given on a 'without prejudice' basis the draft Redundancy Agreement for Industrial staff. It is expected that the draft Agreement will be ratified by the Central Trade Union Side shortly. The Official Side maintained its views that no staff could be made redundant whilst there remains work for them to do. However any request for voluntary premature retirement would be considered sympathetically taking into account the VPR criteria.

(iv) Midweek visits to the Chilton Area

Staff (and their spouses etc) at Ditton Park would be offered the possibility of a visit to the Chilton area on a weekday other than a Saturday. A Circular giving possible dates for a visit later this year would be published shortly.

(v) Visits to Rutherford Laboratory

Visits to Chilton by those Ditton Park staff who had not already been and wished to go would be arranged.

(vi) Bulk Transfer Terms

Central Office is to consider further whether staff at Ditton Park who transfer to Council Establishments other than Rutherford can receive Bulk Transfer Terms.

(vii) Transfers to Civil Service

An initial approach to CSD, seeking help to place staff who wanted to transfer to the Civil Service rather than move to Chilton had been made. Until information about the numbers, grades and disciplines of staff interested are known, the CSD is not able to indicate what help might be given. Interested staff should contact the Merger Unit in the first instance.

2. Progress with the Merger

(i) AL Divisional Structure

Professor Houghton (Director Appleton) explained the background to the new Divisional structure outlined in RALN 2/79. It had been prepared after consultation with the Director General and senior staff at AL.

(ii) Accommodation

Work was progressing on new buildings at Chilton. It was understood that Oxfordshire CC had now agreed to give planning permission for R25 NW Extension (the Wrap-Round building) - plans of which are in the Merger Office.

(iii) Transfer of blocks of work

It is hoped that an outline programme giving the order in which blocks of work might transfer to Chilton will be available by the end of the month whilst a detailed timetable should be available by the end of the year. In preparing the programme account was being taken not only of the progress with new accommodation but also of the wishes expressed by many staff to move during the summer school holidays.

As far as Administrative Services were concerned, these would broadly remain based locally to provide for local requirements. However, should many Administration staff at Ditton Park leave then the position would have to be reviewed.

(iv) Merger Unit

The Merger Working Group had considered a number of requests for VPR or Early Transfer to Chilton. So far 3 requests for early transfer had been agreed and it seemed likely that the first case for which VPR could be agreed was imminent.

3. Title for New Laboratory

For the present the merged laboratories would be known as "Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories". Directors would be known as the "Director General", "Director Rutherford" and "Director Appleton".

4. Whitley Structure

Proposals for the creation of a combined Rutherford and Appleton Laboratories Local Whitley Committee with the possibility of site based sub-Committees have been put to the Central Staff Side. The Staff Sides at Chilton and Ditton Park are to meet in October to consider these proposals. The Official Side pressed for an early resolution to this matter, pointing out that constitutionally the Rutherford Laboratory and Appleton Laboratory Local Whitley Committees ceased to exist on 1 September. It was to be proposed that the LJCC arrangements should remain as pre-merger with the possibility of joint meetings if necessary.

5. Employee Representative on Committees

Arrangements for Employee representation on tripartite committees such as Suggestions Committees, Safety Committees etc would continue. Where the merger gave rise to a need for a change, then the normal consultation with Staff and Trade Union Sides would take place.

6. Recruitment of Mobile Staff for AL Division

The Official Side stated that recruitment of all 'mobile' staff would be undertaken by the Personnel Group at Chilton. Where, however, recruitment is for staff to serve initially at Ditton Park, the Official Side's intention is that consultation will be with the appropriate Staff Association representative at Ditton Park.

7. Local Review Boards. Future Arrangements

In future there will be combined Local Review Boards chaired by the Director General. Prior to the LRB meeting, however, the Director Appleton (with his senior staff), will review the Appleton staff

concerned. The LRB will be attended by senior staff who know the work of the staff being reviewed.

8. Housing Hostel Accommodation

- (a) Rutherford Accommodation - 2 transferees and their families are already being housed in RL accommodation for a fixed period and several single employees have been placed in AERE hostel accommodation.
- (b) Local Authority Mortgages - District Councils in the area have been approached. Some very limited help may be available. (Details are available in the Merger Unit).
- (c) Local Housing Authorities - Approaches will be made to Local Authorities regarding Council accommodation shortly.
- (d) Estate Agents - 12 agents in the Chilton area are supplying information on housing availability. They will be reminded regularly of our continuing need for up to date information. Approaches will be made to agents in the Chilbolton area for similar information.
- (e) Council house purchases - staff who have purchased their Council house may have a clause in the purchase contract which states that if it is to be resold within 5 years, the Local Authority have the right to repurchase it at the original selling price. Local Authorities have discretion to waive this clause although there is no guarantee that they will do so. Management would support the case of any transferee who finds himself in this position. Such staff are, therefore, invited to consult the Merger Unit about their situation.
- (f) Government grants to first time buyers. No penalty clause applies to grants for renovation etc.
- (g) House builders and Frizzells - both Waites (house builders) and Frizzells will send representatives to talk to staff at Ditton Park if requested to do so.

9. Flexible Working Hours

RL Staff Side has indicated that it does not object in principle to the possibility of Ditton Park staff continuing with their FWH scheme at Chilton although existing staff at Chilton may not want a scheme to be applied over the whole site. The Official Side is to see whether a workable scheme which meets the centrally agreed criteria can be devised. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

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10. Job Release Scheme

A government sponsored scheme to encourage women aged 59 and men 62-64 (disabled men 60-64) to retire early with a weekly government grant until retirement age has been in operation for some time. The rules of this scheme are available and eligible staff wishing to be considered should seek further information from the Merger Unit (Mr T Paterson).

27 September 1979