

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Wednesday 25 November 2015 commencing at 4.00pm.

Present: Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)
Councillor Jessie Milne

Representatives of Union members: Karen Lond (Vice-Chairman)
Paul Key

Representatives of Non union staff: Kate Hearn

In attendance:
Alan Robinson Strategic Lead for Business and Democratic Support
Emma Redwood Team Manager – People and Organisational Development
Kim Leith Health and Safety Co-ordinator
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Ian Knowles - Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Rachel Parkin (Staff Representative)

In opening the meeting, the Chairman welcomed newly elected Staff Representative, Kate Hearn, to the meeting and thanked her for her attendance and agreement to undertaking the role.

19. MINUTES (JSCC.14 15/16)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 5 October 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

20. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Elected Members present declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Driving Policy (report JSCC.16 15/16, minute 22 refers) as this Policy would be applicable to them.

21. MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (JSCC.15 15/16)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 17 November 2015.

With reference to the green action entitled “BYOD Policy”, the Governance and Civic Officer advised of the recent decision taken by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee during consideration of this Policy, when it had been resolved that: -

“The Bring Your Own Device Policy be approved and formally adopted for staff, but not apply to Members until such time as all devices used by Members can be fully accommodated into the Policy”.

In light of this resolution, the planned Member workshop, as outlined in the action, would not now proceed and as such, the action would be closed.

RESOLVED that progress on the matters arising schedule as set out in report JSCC.15 15/16 and the additional verbal update detailed above be received and noted.

22. DRIVING POLICY (JSCC.16 15/16)

The Committee gave consideration to a report which presented the Driving Policy for consideration and recommendation on to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for adoption.

The Health and Safety Executive in partnership with the Department for Transport and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had published guidance for employers on “Driving at Work – Managing Work-Related Road Safety”.

The Guidance clearly stated their view that the requirements of Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations applied to all work related activities, including “work-related driving”.

The Guidance went on to state that it was essential to have an effective policy which covered the issue of work-related driving, clearly defining responsibilities for both the employer and employee and the measures to be taken.

Therefore a Policy had been developed, its purpose to ensure that adequate controls were in place to protect the individual, the organisation and anyone else who may be affected by the Council’s activities.

The Scope of the Policy was noted, this being: -

- The policy should be adhered to by all drivers whilst on council business (grey fleet driving)

- The policy needed to be read in conjunction with other relevant policies, procedures, guidance and risk assessments.
- That there was a separate procedure for drivers whose vocation was driving for work (e.g. Operational Services and the chauffeur).
- That the policy did not cover travelling to work, except where an employee's "at work journey" starts from their home to go to a work place, which was not their normal work place location.
- Grey fleet drivers were responsible for the private vehicle they intended to drive and must ensure that it complied with Road traffic law and was properly maintained, safe, roadworthy, taxed, appropriately insured and tested (where applicable) and fit for purpose when used for work.

The responsibilities the Policy placed on the:

- Chief Executive;
- Directors, Strategic Leads and Team Managers;
- Health and Safety Co-ordinator;
- Safety Champions Group;
- Operational Services and Vocational Drivers; and
- Employees and Elected Members (Grey Fleet)

as detailed on pages 4 and 5 of the Policy were outlined in detail to the Committee, together with the Policy's position in terms of mobile phones and driving as detailed on Page 6.

Debate ensued and with regard to the mobile phone section of the Policy, the Vice Chairman made reference to the ROSPA Guidance (page 8) which stated "do not use mobile phones or other devices while driving – either hand held or hands free", noting the differing stance the proposed Policy was taking.

Unison's view was that the Council's Policy should reflect that of the ROSPA guidance and that "discouraging" or "dissuading" employees from using hands-free devices was not strong enough. They could therefore not support the Policy in its current form.

In responding the Strategic Lead for Business and Democratic Support advised that much consideration had been given to the wording of this Section. Firstly, it was noted that the ROSPA document was a "guidance" document. The current wording of the Policy provided a degree of flexibility and choice. It allowed employees, if they so chose, the ability to make use of travelling of time by using hands-free devices, however it also allowed and gave permission for employees to feel comfortable to not have to take calls via hands free-devices when travelling, if they preferred.

It was questioned whether the Policy could be applied to Members. Officers confirmed if business mileage was claimed for then the Policy was applicable. In responding to concerns over the expectation for employees / elected Members to

undertake vehicle inspections, reassurance was offered that this simply referred to standard vehicle condition checks any roadside assistance company or the Highway Code would encourage travellers to undertake before setting off on a journey, for example, tyre conditions, water bottle levels etc.

RESOLVED that it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee that: -

- (a) the Driving Policy be approved for formal adoption; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Lead responsible for Customer First to make minor house-keeping amendments to the Policy in the future, in consultation with the Chairmen of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

23. CHRISTMAS CLOSING – A FIVE YEAR PLAN (JSCC.17 15/16)

Members gave consideration to a report which provided a proposed five year plan of Christmas and New Year office closures. The Plan had been developed to allow Officers to start negotiations with tenants in the building much more in advance. It was also hoped that advance notification of office closures would assist staff with making appropriate leave arrangements, as staff currently had to use their annual leave entitlement or flexi hours to accommodate “agreed closed days”.

In responding to Committee’s questions, it was confirmed that tenants were aware of the proposals and were engaging.

Debate ensued during which a number of suggestions were made including: -

- Giving consideration to earlier closes on New Year’s Eve and Christmas Eve (regardless of the day they fall on)
- Creating a 7 year plan so that every eventually was covered.

It was noted that the offices would close at 3.00pm this Christmas Eve and clarification was sought as to whether those staff working would be allowed to claim for a full day or have to use flexi leave to accommodate this. Staff taking annual leave on this day would use a full days leave and there was some concern that this could lead to inconsistency.

The Team Manager for People and Organisational Development confirmed that further communication would be circulated to staff regarding this matter, although it was likely to involve some line manager discretion.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the contents of the report, as the basis for consultation with partners and staff be noted; and

- (b) the Committee's comments noted above be taken into consideration as part of the consultation.

24. WORK PLAN (JSCC.18 15/16)

Members gave consideration to their future work plan as set out in report JSCC.18 15/16. It was noted that if any Committee Member wished to see a report on a particular issue, this could also be raised.

It was noted that it was not now intended to re-run the staff survey in December 2015, but rather to form a staff engagement group with a view to using this group to create an action plan to address the points raised in the previous survey. Referring to the Committee's meeting scheduled for 31 March 2016, it was now intended to bring an Update / Progress report on the work of the engagement group, as opposed to staff survey results as stated. Officers undertook to update the Forward Plan accordingly.

At the request of a Member of the Committee, the purpose of the Travel Policy, due for consideration at the Committee's next meeting, was outlined.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan, as set out in report JSCC.18 15/16 and the amendment made verbally detailed above, be received and noted.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm.

Chairman