

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on Thursday, 4 October 2018 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Members: Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne

Representatives of Union members: James Deacon

Representatives of Non-union staff: Amy Potts

In attendance: Alan Robinson, Strategic Lead People and Governance/Monitoring Officer
Emma Redwood, People and Organisational Development Manager
Ele Durrant, Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Matthew Boles
Rachel Parkin, Senior Home Choices Officer

15 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point in the meeting.

16 MINUTES

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Amy Potts, Staff Member, to the Committee. He explained to all present that Amy had joined as a member in June 2018 but had been unable to attend the previous meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 5 July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

17 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Committee gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions, as at 26 September 2018. The Democratic and Civic Officer explained there was only one item on the schedule, relating to mental health in the workplace, and this had been marked as completed. The Chairman noted that the item had not been dismissed but there had been no further information shared from central

government and the People and Organisational Development Manager had already included a report into workplace wellbeing to be heard later on in the civic year. For that reason, the corresponding matter was considered to have been completed.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising Schedule as at 26 September 2018 be received and noted.

18 **REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

The People and Organisational Development Manager introduced a report relating to the review of the Health and Safety Policy. She explained that since the new Health and Safety Co-ordinator had been in post he had fully reviewed the policy and updated it accordingly. She noted there were some minor amendments such as job titles and team structures but there were also other aspects that had been incorporated from other policies.

There was discussion regarding the management of stress in the workplace and it was confirmed the Health and Safety Co-ordinator was available to liaise with in terms of making adequate adjustments but that it may also be suitable for Occupational Health services to become involved.

A Member of Committee highlighted the praise-worthy manner in which the council treated pregnant employees and noted it was an example of good practice.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Members, unions and staff representatives support and note the changes to the reviewed policy and recommend the same for adoption by the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee; and
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee and Chairman of JSCC.

19 **REVIEW OF CAREER BREAK SCHEME**

The Committee was asked to give consideration to a report regarding the Career Break Scheme which had been reviewed in line with updated guidance regarding, for example, pension contributions and parental leave entitlement. The People and Organisational Development Manager explained there had been little change to the substance of the policy but the amendments had been necessary following changes to government guidelines. There was some discussion regarding the difficulties of recruiting into posts left vacant due to employees taking a career break and it was

acknowledged that there was not a simple recruitment solution. However, it was highlighted to Committee that there was next to no take up of the career break scheme and therefore it was not a frequently faced difficulty.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Members, unions and staff representatives support, note and recommend the attached Career Break Scheme Procedure to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for formal adoption; and
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy & Resources committee and Chairman of JSCC.

20 **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR JSCC**

The Strategic Lead for People and Governance introduced a report which had been requested by the Chairman at the previous meeting. The purpose of the report was to consider options to review the Terms of Reference for the Committee, specifically in view of recent cancellations that had happened due to lack of staff or union representation. It was noted that the current Terms of Reference required there to be one Union Representative present in order for the meeting to be quorate, however, there was only one person on Committee as Union Rep and so it fell to him to be present for any given meeting to go ahead. The suggested amendment was for the quorum to be set at two Councillors and one member of staff – either Union or Staff Representative.

It was highlighted that the quorum was the minimum number required for the meeting to go ahead and this by no means excluded any member of Committee from attending. The People and Organisational Development Manager explained that any report she brought to Committee would have previously been shared with union representatives and relevant staff members and so there would have been feedback provided prior to being considered by Committee.

After further highlighting that the amended terms of reference were not intended to exclude anyone from attending the Committee, it was

RESOLVED that option three, to change the terms of reference to show that the quorum would be two councillors, and either one staff or one union representative, be recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for formal adoption.

21 **STAFF SURVEY RESULTS**

The People and Organisational Development Manager introduced a report detailing the results from the 2018 staff survey. This had been discussed briefly at the previous meeting but there was now more detail to the responses. It was explained that staff were asked to respond to the same 14 questions as the previous year and that, of these questions, all bar one had shown a positive improvement on the results from last year. It was also highlighted that the results in 2017 had been hugely positive in comparison with previous survey results and it was testament to the work accomplished in recent months that the results continued to improve.

There was a question regarding the communication from Senior Management and it was explained that although there were now regular corporate updates held for all staff, the crux of the issue had been more the accessibility of Senior Management. Suggestions made by staff to improve this had been as simple as using the main entrance and staircase in order to meet more staff face to face and also sharing staff spaces for lunch or coffee breaks. This more open approach had seen an improvement in staff perception of communication with Senior Management and this did appear to be a continually improving situation.

A Member of Committee enquired as to the satisfaction with accommodation, with around 40% of employees stating they were not happy with the accommodation. It was explained that this was an area of focus for the Staff Engagement Group and that some changes, such as the breakout space on the third floor, had already been implemented. Other initiatives, such as screening the top windows to avoid sun glare and also replacing the office lights, would start to have a beneficial impact across all teams. The Committee was told about several staff consultation events that were being held in order to gauge comments and feedback for suggestions as to how the office space could be redesigned for better use. It was agreed that the involvement of staff in these consultations was a massive step forward and that the importance of engaging staff could not be underestimated.

The contents of the report were noted and it was agreed that the Staff Engagement Group would bring regular updates to the Committee as there were likely to be several ongoing projects to feedback about.

A Member of Committee also requested that congratulations be shared to all staff and that it was important to recognise what had been achieved across the council.

22 **WORK PLAN**

The Work Plan for the business of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee was presented. Members were advised that the report relating to mental health and wellbeing in the workplace had not yet been assigned to a

specific meeting but was showing on the work plan as ‘being scoped’.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

23 **TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

NOTED that the next meeting of the JSCC be held on Thursday 22 November 2018, 4.00pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 4.54 pm.

Chairman