

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Thursday 7 July 2016 commencing at 4.00pm.

Present: Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)
Councillor Jessie Milne

Representatives of Union members: Paul Key

Representatives of Non union staff: Kate Hearn

In attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead for Democracy and Business Support
Michelle Howard	Team Manager – Home Options
Emma Redwood	Team Manager – People and Organisational Development
Kim Leith	Health and Safety Co-ordinator
Jo Brown	HR and Organisational Development Officer
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Matthew Boles
Karen Lond – UNISON Representative (Vice-Chairman)
Rachel Parkin - Staff Representative)

14 MINUTES (JSCC.01 16/17)

(a) Meeting held on 2 June 2016

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 2 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

15 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

16 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (JSCC.10 16/17)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 29 June 2016

It was noted that all actions had been completed.

RESOLVED that progress on the matters arising schedule as set out in report JSCC.10 16/17 be received and noted.

17 STAFF ENGAGEMENT GROUP – VERBAL UPDATE/PROGRESS

The Team Manager, People and Organisational Development, provided a verbal update to the Committee on the work of the Staff Engagement Group.

As previously advised, as opposed to re-running the Staff Survey, the engagement Group had been established in the first instance to undertake proactive work with the workforce. Having reviewed the results of the last survey the Group had identified two areas to focus on, these being “The Council Communicates Well” and “I feel Valued and Recognised”. The Membership of the Group comprised representatives from a number of Teams including the Depot and whilst not all teams were covered Group Members had given a commitment to engage wider than their own personal team.

With regard to communication, which had been selected as the first priority to be addressed, as previously reported the Group had devised a number of mini-projects aimed at helping to improve communication across the organisation, examples being, providing staff an opportunity to set an element of the Corporate Update agenda, ask questions and provide feedback post the event; regularising the Chief Executive’s Blog and the introduction of Senior Officer Blogs; making use of newly installed monitors around the Guildhall, to show important and key corporate messages. A number of these had now been implemented and appeared to have been received positively. These mini projects had a formed an action plan and this would be kept under review.

The next area to be addressed by the Group was Reward and Recognition, and the group would again be asked to devise mini-projects for implementation with a view to creating an action plan.

It was noted that further updates would be submitted to the Committee as the Group’s work progressed.

The Joint Staff Consultative Committee welcomed the work that was being undertaken.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

18 SAFEGUARDING POLICY (JSCC.11 16/17)

Members were asked to give consideration to a report which presented the revised safeguarding policy.

The revised policy provided a framework to ensure that West Lindsey District Council met its statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of:

- Safeguarding children and young people (Children Act, 2004)
- Safeguarding adults at risk (Care Act, 2014)
- Preventing people from being drawn into violent extremism (Prevent Duty, 2015)
- Domestic Abuse (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Coercive Control Law 2015, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020, Protection from Harassment Act 1997)
- Hate Crime and Mate Crime (Equality Act, 2010)

The Council's safeguarding policy had been reviewed by the Corporate Safeguarding Working Group in response to a number of legislative changes, to ensure that West Lindsey District Council could effectively meet its safeguarding responsibilities. The changes also reflected recommendations made in the 'Vulnerable People Audit' (Internal Audit, 2015).

The policy document provided a reference point for Council staff, elected members, volunteers, key contractors, consultants and directly commissioned providers acting on behalf of the Council in order to protect anyone from failing to keep people safe. The policy and procedures sought to provide practical guidance and sought to ensure that the Council played its full part in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of its communities at all times.

Broadly speaking, the Council's safeguarding responsibilities included:

- Having effective safeguarding policies in place
- Knowing how to identify concerns
- Having a knowledgeable and capable workforce
- Referring to partners
- Working with partners such as the police, social services, health agencies and other local authorities
- Regular auditing and scrutiny

It was important that a consistent and effective approach was adopted across the Council to ensure it met its statutory responsibilities, protected the community and protected the reputation of the Council.

The scope of the safeguarding policy had been expanded to include each of the policy areas which impacted on supporting and protecting vulnerable people.

The combined policy and associated procedures were split into distinct chapters.

- Chapter 1: 'Safeguarding is Everyone's Business'
- Chapter 2: Safeguarding Children & Young People
- Chapter 3: Safeguarding Adults at Risk
- Chapter 4: Domestic Abuse
- Chapter 5: Prevent
- Chapter 6: Hate Crime & Mate Crime

Throughout the policy, there were links to internal and external guidance and policies and to associated procedures.

It was noted that it had been intended to include a 7 Chapter, entitled Training, Governance and Audit, as indicated in the covering report, however on reflection this matter had now been integrated throughout the whole document.

The policy would be reviewed on an annual basis, and updated where appropriate, however if a weakness was identified in procedures or national guidelines changed, the policy would be reviewed and revised immediately. Any amendments to national or local guidelines and legislation would be recorded within the policy and signed off by the Core Management Team. Staff, Elected Members, volunteers and anyone working for and / or on behalf of the council would be notified of any changes to the policy or associated procedures.

The policy was supported by procedural guidance, training and awareness action plan and an audit programme (led by the respective safeguarding boards). Delivery of the policy objectives and actions were coordinated by the Corporate Safeguarding Working Group. The group's terms of reference and membership were shared with the Committee.

Debate ensued and it was suggested that an Elected Member Representative should be sought to attend the Corporate Safeguarding Working Group.

In responding to questions, it was noted that Elected Members had received training on Safeguarding as part of their induction. All were of the view that refresher training should be held for Members and it was noted that this had been included in the Member Development Plan and would likely take the form of on-line training.

At the request of the Committee the nature of "mate crime" was outlined.

Mr Key, outlined certain scenarios, which street operatives, might be likely to witness, and enquired as to whether these would be safeguarding issues. The Team Manager for Home Options, indicated that anything that caused a person concern should be reported and it would be for the responsible person to determine whether action needed to be taken. The Home Options Team Manager, indicated that she would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with street operatives to ensure they knew the processes by which to report concerns.

RESOLVED that it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Prosperous Communities Committee that: -

- (a) the revised Safeguarding Policy be approved for formal adoption; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources to make minor house-keeping amendments to the Policy in the future, in consultation with the Chairmen of the Prosperous Communities Committee and Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

19 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (JSCC.12 16/17)

The Committee gave consideration to a report which provided a summary of performance of the Health and Safety Service throughout the Authority.

The report aimed to:

- Give members and leadership team reassurance and confidence that health, safety and welfare was being properly managed within the organisation by sharing of information on progress and delivery;
- Provide an auditable trail of engagement with Members and senior leadership that would contribute to demonstrating compliance to external enforcement agencies
- Maintain health, safety and welfare at the front and centre of the organisation as a corporate priority; and
- Demonstrate the transparent, proactive management and control of corporate risk, legal compliance and reputation.

The Committee placed on record their thanks to the Health and Safety Co-ordinator and all of the Safety Champions for the work they undertook throughout the year. It was suggested that a formal message be communicated via the newly installed TV monitors.

Discussion ensued during which Mr Key raised concerns that managers were undertaking the role of Safety Champs at the Depot and questioned whether this gave rise to a conflict of interest. He further advised that this caused concern amongst some of the work force. In responding to further questions, the Committee were advised that the Health and Safety Co-ordinator, had a role in selecting safety champions, in the event that there was more than 1 expression of interest. In response to a direct question, Mr Key confirmed that he had not raised concerns at the time the Safety Champs had being appointed

The Chairman sought and received confirmation that the report would be proceeding to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and on that basis it was:-

RESOLVED that the update be received, supported, noted and **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Note: Mr Key abstained from voting on the above decision.

20 MATERNITY POLICY – POLICY REVIEW (JSCC.13 16/17)

Members were asked to give consideration to a report which reviewed the current Maternity Policy and recommended a number of changes arising from updated legislation to be adopted subsequently by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

In presenting the report it was noted that all of the proposed changes had been listed out in Appendix A to the report for clarity and ease.

The Policy had been developed by the HR and OD Officer and in doing so feedback had been obtained from 11 employees who were currently pregnant or had taken maternity leave within the last 4 years. The Policy had also been sent to Unison and Staff Reps for comment.

The Policy would be made available on Minerva and clear communication would be sent to all Managers to make them aware that the Policy had been reviewed and to update them on their responsibilities. Training and support would also be offered by the HR Team on the implementation and application of this policy.

In responding to questions it was confirmed that no instances of Shared Parental Leave had been applied for. It was further noted that this reflected the national picture.

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

- (a) the Maternity Policy be approved for formal adoption; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources 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.

21 WORK PLAN (JSCC.14 16/17)

Members gave consideration to their future work plan as set out in report JSCC.14 16/17. It was noted that if any Committee Member wished to see a report on a particular issue, this could also be raised.

Mr Key sought and received clarification on the content of both the “introduce a leaving the authority procedure” and “Introduce a fixed term contract procedure” work items.

It was further noted that the deferred travel policy would now likely be re-submitted in October 2016.

RESOLVED that the Work Plan, as set out in report JSCC.14 16/17 be received and noted.

22 TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 8 September 2016 at 4.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 4.40 pm.

Chairman