

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on Thursday, 16 January 2020 commencing at 4.00 pm.

**Members:** Councillor Timothy Davies  
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne

**Representatives of Union members:** James Deacon

**Representatives of Non-union staff:** Rachel Parkin (in the Chair)  
Amy Potts

**In attendance:** Alan Robinson, Monitoring Officer  
Emma Redwood, People and Organisational Development Manager  
Steve Anderson, Data Protection Officer  
Ele Snow, Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor David Cotton  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway

**21 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**22 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 3 October 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**23 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Democratic and Civic Officer advised the Committee there was one item on the matters arising schedule which had now been completed. This related to the overarching document for all data protection related policies which was to be heard later on in the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the matters arising schedule be noted.

## 24 REVIEW AND RATIONALISE INFORMATION SECURITY POLICIES

The Data Protection Officer introduced a report regarding the rationalisation of the council's information security policies. He explained that there had been a large suite of policies to cover different aspects of information security and to remain up to date with legislation changes. The purpose of this document was to rationalise those policies into one document making it easier for staff to use and reference. It was proposed that, with the formal adoption of this policy, several of the earlier policies be withdrawn.

The Data Protection Officer highlighted to members of the Committee an additional paragraph which had been shared with them at the start of the meeting. This was regarding the use of smartphones in the workplace and would be added to the main policy. He added that the policy as it was had been shared with internal groups following consultation with staff and would be going to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for final adoption.

The Chairman enquired about the details of the additional paragraph and it was explained that it was not a blanket statement against all smartphones in the workplace, rather it sought to distinguish between personal and work phones and acknowledge that the use of personal phones in some areas of the council would not be appropriate. It was suggested that the wording of the additional paragraph could be amended slightly to make this distinction more obvious and the Data Protection Officer agreed to share the amended paragraph with the Chairman prior to sending the report to the next Committee.

The Committee praised the Data Protection Officer for his work and thanked him for producing a document that was considerably easier to understand and work with, in comparison with the multitude of policies previously. With the agreement to reword the additional paragraph, it was unanimously

### **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Members of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee support and recommend the new policy to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for formal adoption;
- b) The withdrawal of the following policies be approved:
  - Email Acceptable Use
  - Internet Acceptable Use
  - Computer, Telephone and Desk Use
  - Public Service Network Acceptable Use
  - Northgate Acceptable Use;
- c) Any future housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

## 25 **COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY**

The Committee heard from the People and Organisational Development Manager regarding the Compassionate Leave Policy. She explained that for several years there had been arrangements in place for compassionate leave but there had been no guidance or policy. The aim of this policy was to introduce some level of consistency whilst retaining manager's discretion on a case by case basis. Committee Members were also advised that there was a new Parental Bereavement Act coming into effect from April 2020 which would be incorporated in this policy.

There was discussion amongst Members regarding the balance between following the policy, consulting HR and using manager's discretion as, by the very nature of compassionate leave, each circumstance would be different. It was agreed that most managers already worked closely with the HR team in such circumstances however the People and Organisational Development Manager suggested adding the phrase '...in consultation with HR' when considering individuals' entitlement to longer periods of compassionate leave.

With no further discussion it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Members, unions and staff representatives support and recommend the Compassionate Leave Policy to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for adoption; and
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of CP&R committee and Chairman of JSCC.

## 26 **SICKNESS ABSENCE UPDATE**

The People and Organisational Development Manager introduced a paper detailing the most recent sickness absence statistics. She explained that, in comparison with previous years, there were no areas of concern, no particular spikes or issues to be aware of. She detailed how there had been a series of wellbeing sessions for staff to attend at lunchtimes and there continued to be a focus on mental wellbeing in the workplace.

There was further discussion regarding mental health issues for staff and it was confirmed that support was readily available through the Employee Assistance Programme.

**RESOLVED** that the content of the report be noted.

## 27 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY REVIEW**

The People and Organisational Development Manager introduced her final report regarding the review of the Social Media policy. She explained that the Communications Team and the Data Protection Officer had worked in conjunction to ensure it covered all aspects of social media use. She highlighted the parts that had been amended and, in response to a question in relation to the list of social media applications, she explained that the areas covered in the report were not exhaustive but were designed to inform staff of the variety of networking sites covered by the policy.

There was discussion between Committee Members about whether Elected Members should be referred to in the policy. It was highlighted that Elected Members were directed to the policy and advised to adhere to the guidelines, however, there was nothing in place to enforce the policy should a Member choose not to follow the advice. In contrast, should a member of staff be found to be acting in breach of the policy, there were clear disciplinary procedures which could be invoked. The Committee heard that the policy was referenced in the Corporate Induction for new employees with emphasis given to the expectations placed on staff members. All were in agreement that the principles of the policy were relevant for Elected Members and the induction programme for Members should continue to highlight the policy.

It was therefore

### **RESOLVED** that

- a) Members, unions and staff representatives support and recommend the Social Media Policy to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for adoption; and
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the Chairman of CP&R committee and Chairman of JSCC.

## 28 **WORK PLAN**

The Committee gave consideration to the workplan for upcoming meetings. They heard that the Recruitment and Selection Policy had been delayed several times as work to streamline recruitment processes were ongoing. The People and Organisational Development Manager explained that, under current processes, the post-interview timescale was often delayed by the requirement to obtain references from two previous employers. This could prove difficult for a number of reasons and options for not requiring these references, and therefore improving the speed of recruitment, were being looked at. She confirmed that the policy would be presented to Committee

once all involved were satisfied it was the best and final version.

**RESOLVED** that the workplan be noted.

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

**NOTED** that the next meeting of the JSCC be held on Thursday 26 March 2020, 4.00pm in the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 4.50 pm.

Chairman