

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held via MS Teams on Thursday, 18 November 2021 commencing at 4.00 pm.

**Members:** Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)  
Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway

**Representatives of Union members:** James Deacon (Vice Chairman)

**Representatives of Non-union staff:** Rachel Parkin  
Amy Potts

**In attendance:** Emma Redwood, Assistant Director People and Democratic Services  
John Bingham, Assistant Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne

**23 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**24 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 7 October 2021, be approved as a correct record.

**25 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

There were no outstanding matters arising.

**26 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE POLICY**

The Committee heard from the Data Protection Officer regarding the Information Governance Policy. It was explained that the purpose of the policy document was to ensure that information management was in place, with clear direction as to how to follow and comply with these requirements. The Officer stated that some updating of the policy was required.

During the course of discussions, it was queried why Members were being asked to approve an operational document. It was explained that it was standard procedure for such documents to be presented to this Committee and subsequently the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, for relevant approval.

Having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the amendments to the Information Governance Policy be supported and recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for formal adoption; and
- b) any future housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairs of the Joint Staff Consultative and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees.

## 27 **INFORMATION CLASSIFICATION AND HANDLING POLICY**

The Committee gave consideration to the second report from the Data Protection Officer, regarding the Information Classification and Handling Policy. He explained that the policy laid out the standards and expectations of the information systems used within West Lindsey District Council to support the business of the council.

Regarding point 2.2 in the Policy, it was commented that Councillors might also handle sensitive information, as well as Officers, and that this area would need to be addressed. Members were advised that this had been recognised and options were under review.

With regard to point 29 in the Policy, concerning the removal of IT equipment, the Vice Chairman commented that most staff were using IT equipment to enable them to work from home. The Data Protection Officer and the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services agreed to look into this. In addition, the Data Protection Officer would link this Policy with the IT Policy.

Having been moved and seconded, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the amendments to the Information Classification and Handling Policy be supported and recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for formal adoption; and
- b) any future housekeeping amendments be delegated to the

Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairs of the Joint Staff Consultative and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees.

## 28 **UPDATE ON SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services informed the Committee that April/May 2021 had seen low numbers of absences but that October 2021 had seen an increased amount of short term sickness. However, there could be higher figures by the end of this year. It was explained that there would be regular sickness absence updates included in the Work Plan for the Committee.

With no comments or questions, the contents of the Sickness Absence Update report were **DULY NOTED**.

## 29 **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee heard that whistleblowing activity was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on an annual basis. At the meeting of that Committee in June 2021 a number of recommendations had been made, with the reviewed policy to be shared with JSCC and recommended to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval. Recommendations in the policy were shown in black text, with responses from the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services shown in red.

During the course of discussions, attention was drawn to page 6 where it was stated “concerns should be raised by the Leader”. It was noted that anything at the level of CEO could be sensitive meaning that the Leader of Council should receive appropriate training to be able to operate accordingly at that level. It was also stated that guidance for Members as to how to whistleblow on Officers needed to be explicit.

The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services agreed to look at all feedback received and report back again to the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee on 20 January 2022.

## 30 **WORK PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Committee work plan as published, however it was noted there were additional items for upcoming meetings, such as the return of the Whistleblowing Policy Review, Sickness Absence Updates and a report on the effects of Covid. There would also be updates in relation to the National Pay Award.

As a current update, the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services explained that the matter had not been concluded and would

continue into the New Year. Unions had not agreed to the offer of 1.75% and Unite were to ballot for strike action.

With no further questions or comments from the Committee, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

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

The date and time of the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to be held at 4pm on Thursday, 20 January 2022, was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 4.36 pm.

Chairman