

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held via MS Teams on Thursday, 24 March 2022 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Members: Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne

Representatives of Union members: James Deacon (Vice Chairman, in the Chair)

Representatives of Non-union staff: Amy Potts

In attendance: Emma Redwood, Assistant Director People and Democratic Services
Robert Gilliot, Operational Services Manager
Ele Snow, Senior Democratic and Civic Officer
Andrew Warnes, Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)

40 **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

41 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 20 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

42 **MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

There were no outstanding matters arising.

43 **DEPOT UPDATE**

The Vice Chairman (who was taking the Chair for the meeting, and is referred to as Chairman from hereon in) invited the Operational Services Manager to present the first item, which was a verbal update on the new West Lindsey District Council depot. The Officer used several slides to present the information and photographs during this item.

Members heard that the depot had been 'live' for four months at the time of the meeting, which was operational from the 6th December 2021. The Officer reminded the Committee that the previous locations of the depots had now been handed back, and were at the time of the meeting being used for storage for the new purple lidded bins. The new depot was designed specifically for providing the operational service as a central location for the district, and for future food waste processing.

At this point in the item, the Officer presented several photos of the new depot, which included featured photos such as the entrance lobby, the operational kitchen, the entrance for the operational staff, the changing rooms and the upstairs office. There were also slides showing the equipment buildings and the vehicles yard, which included the storage of the vehicles.

The Officer then updated Members on the events since the site went operational on 6th December 2021. Members learnt that there were some minor 'teething' problems, which included the implementation of new rounds, and the changing of habits. Following consultation with the teams, by mid-January, the Officer felt that the operations were back to the usual operating standards. The Officer stated that staff were generally happy with the new site. The presentation concluded with highlights of the site issues since the opening, which included drainage issues, and pipes not working, which were now resolved and the site was operating normally.

With no further information or statements, the information presented by the Operational Services Manager was **NOTED**.

44 **UPDATE HGV DRIVER MARKET SUPPLEMENT**

The Operational Services Manager then moved on to present the second item, which was a short update on the HGV Market Supplement offered in the wake of the HGV driver crisis. Members learnt that the decision to offer a £500 market supplement due to West Lindsey losing drivers, with private HGV companies being able to 'poach' West Lindsey District Council drivers by offering higher salaries. Following a report to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee being accepted, and that a supplement for three years would bring up wages to similar organisations in Lincolnshire of around an average of £27,000, West Lindsey District Council had not lost any more drivers. The Officer stated that these drivers were grateful and happy with the additional money.

The Officer concluded his remarks as he informed the Committee that in the January 2022 posting for HGV drivers, for the two posts, there were only three applicants. All of them agency staff, and no external applicants. Members also learnt that a Loader for the local authority had passed his HGV theory test, and was undertaking a full practical test shortly.

Further comments were made by Members and other Officers.

Comments included that this market supplement showed that West Lindsey District Council were willing to invest in their staff and give them their support. There was also reference to the delays in the DVLA issuing backlog that might have been avoided.

With no further information or statements, the report presented by the Operational Services Manager was **NOTED**.

45 **NATIONAL PAY AWARD UPDATE**

The Chairman invited the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to present the third item, which was an update to the discussions for the National Pay Award.

Members learnt that following an agreement in February 2022, after a prolonged, disappointingly lengthened discussion, an increase of 1.75% was agreed upon. This pay award increase was to apply for staff's pay for March 2022 in the form of a lump sum payment. Members also heard that the National Joint Council had started proceedings for the April 2022 reward, and that the Officer would keep the Committee updated with any updates.

In this item, comment was made that it was not within West Lindsey District Council's gift to make payment ahead of agreement being reached, with advice that organisations should not go out of the collective bargaining process.

With no further questions or comments, the contents of the report were duly **NOTED**.

46 **UPDATE ON SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Chairman then invited the Officer to present the fourth report of the meeting, which was an update on sickness absences, up to the latest figures for March 2022.

Members learnt that the level of sickness had fluctuated, with a spike in absences in October/November, going down in December, and eventually stabilising in January/February.

In October, there were about four long term cases, in addition to the usual coughs and colds, with reference to a non-Covid virus being in transit. This was followed in November, where there were eight long term cases, an ill health retirement, and one Officer returning to work. Four other long-term staff absences returned to work.

The Committee learnt that barring any exceptional circumstances, the

absences for March 2022 were on par with January and February 2022, with the target of less than 7 days absence per FTE being achieved.

The Officer then reminded Members that the figures for Covid were tracked separately, as advised by the National Joint Council. There were quite a few cases, but with a number not experiencing significant illness many were able to work from home, despite the rise in the number of cases.

After the Officer presented the update, the following statements and comments were made.

Discussion ensued on the level of Covid related illnesses and absences generally. A question rose on the future picture. The Officer commented that with working from home, other Officers were able to keep on track with work. Reference was made to the situation in care homes by a different Member of the Committee, and that West Lindsey District Council's level was not as severe.

A Member of the Committee gave her thanks to the staff for carrying on with their work in the current situation.

With no further questions or comments, the update on Sickness Absence was **NOTED**.

47 **ANNUAL GENDER PAY REPORT**

The Chairman then invited the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to present the final item of the meeting, the Annual Gender Pay Report, which was a retrospective report based on figures on 31 March 2021.

This report is a requirement made by HM Government for organisations with over 250 staff members, acting as a 'snapshot in time'. The Officer stated that this was a long lag in the data, with the figures being skewed by the all-male staff in the operational delivery teams, whilst other organisations had their operational delivery outsourced.

The Officer stressed to the Committee that it was a snapshot on a single day, pointing to a theoretical example of 10 Officers leaving, recruiting ten different Officers the next. During this item, it was pointed out that West Lindsey District Council encouraged flexible working policies for all its employees, and this allowed a number of potential parents to come back to work.

Following no further statements or comments, the report was **NOTED**, and that contents would be publicised on the West Lindsey District Council website.

48 **WORK PLAN**

The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services informed the Committee that the workplan for the 2022/23 council year had not yet been populated, but was able to confirm the items that were to come to the next Joint Staff Consultative Committee meeting.

These included:

- A full absence report for the 2021/22 council year;
- An item on attaining a new Staff Representative Member for the committee;
- An update on health and safety, and;
- An item on the staff survey regarding Covid-19. The Officer stressed that this report will be sent before then, with a discussion held beforehand.

During this item, Members requested several topics for JSCC consideration. The following topics were suggested.

Regarding the attaining a new Staff Representative, there was a consensus that the actions for this would start before the meeting.

Discussion on a potential future item to look at the effect of the cost of living crisis. The Officer informed the Committee that this was a possibility for a future meeting, and that the local authority were signposting employees for assistance. The Officer also commented that any useful resources could be sent to her.

There was also discussion about the rising costs of petrol and gas was made, about whether the claim rate actually covered the actual costs. The Officer stated that West Lindsey District Council were paying the HMRC rate, and that if the rate was increased above 45p, that would be taxed.

With no further comments from Members of the Committee, the Work Plan as at 16 March 2022 was **NOTED**.

49 **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, 26 May 2022, was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 4.27 pm.

Chairman