

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the MS Teams on Thursday, 19 January 2023 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Members: 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
Cliff Dean, ICT Team Manager
Michelle Thompson, Human Resources Manager (Temporary)
Andrew Warnes, Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor David Cotton (Chairman)

24 **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

25 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 8 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

26 **MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Democratic and Civic Officer stated that there were two new Matters Arisings, both of which required longer term consideration by the Officers responsible.

With no further comment, the Matters Arising schedule was **NOTED**.

27 **ICT POLICY UPDATE**

The Officer explained the update was to allow West Lindsey District Council

to change technical controls for future updates. These included big opportunity's for officers, such as the possibility of using 'face recognition' logins through Windows Hello, security protections, and ensuring that cyber hackers would be prohibited from gaining access. This was to better position the organisation for future major IT updates.

The updates are included procedural elements to assist the IT team, such as malware, ransomware, and the Change Management Process. There was also an update to the patching process undertaken by the IT team, having received a high assurance from Audit on the process. The Officer also explained that the network connection element update was an agreement for third party suppliers to ascertain access to the network, facilitating getting qualified people on the network. There was also an update to the business continuity process, which updated the care and process of back-ups and the main data centre for both West Lindsey District Council, and North Kesteven District Council.

Debate ensued, and Members were appreciative of the review and the updated policies proposed. In response to a query about training and whether Officers had understood, the ICT Manager explained that the Council was able to actively monitor the situation, and note whether officers were working securely. There were policies in place to these technical solutions. It was further explained that there were thousands of phishing attacks made against the organisation each day, and the aim for all officers was to be aware of what was good and bad in emails and communication. The Officer explained that he wanted the technical ability to change the safety controls, and eliminate the pain from staff. In a later query, the Vice Chairman clarified that staff go through annual mandatory training, with a quiz that required a pass mark at the end of the training.

Responding to a set of queries about security and protection of the network both internally, and externally, Members heard that with hackers, whether they were external or even Members of staff could be prohibited from access, such as from alerts in place that detailed reports on activity, available on the systems.

The Vice Chairman stated that Revenues and Benefits had daily reports on the previous day's activity, and that there was an audit trail readily available in case of misuse and abuse of the system.

In a reply to a separate query, Members held that the back-ups were initially to the primary data centre in Sleaford, and then onto the Cloud. The Officer explained that a procurement process to amend the back up length from 30 days to a year was being finalised.

After the debate, the ICT Manager also informed Members that the organisation had been asked to be one of five lead councils for the Cyber Security Centre in testing new security designs.

Accordingly, having been moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that ICT Policy report and associated updated policies be approved, and that the Committee had provided feedback to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee as part of the approval process.

28 **GENDER PAY REPORT (MARCH 2022 DATA)**

The Chairman then invited the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to present the next item of the meeting, the Annual Gender Pay Report, which was a retrospective report based on figures on 31 March 2022.

This report was 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 large majority of male staff in the operational delivery teams, whilst other organisations had their operational delivery outsourced.

The Officer also commented that there were more women tending to hold more senior Guildhall based roles.

The Officer stressed to the Committee that it was a snapshot on a single day, and that the Chief Executive was to sign and then publish it on the West Lindsey District Council website.

In response to a query about the lack of progression of the operational delivery staff and raised concerns about the working conditions, the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services explained that there were numerous examples of the team based at the depot progressing into different roles. These included internal promotions, HGV licenses attained, and the Director of Operational and Commercial Services having started as an operational delivery employee.

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

29 **UPDATE ON SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Chair invited the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to present the next item, which was an Update on Sickness Absence up to December 2022.

The Officer explained that the annual target figure for sickness absence was no higher than 7.0 FTE, which the Officer explained that the Council was likely to meet. Members heard that the absence level in October was low, whilst the figures had jumped in both November and December 2022. The

Assistant Director attributed this to an increase of colds and general winter viruses.

The Officer explained that the figures were quite low, and that the main factor of absences were short term, and of little concern. The situation was to continue monitoring the absence levels.

A Member made a comment on lower sickness absences, and noted the lower levels of absences in comparison to the level of absences prior to Covid and the lockdowns.

With no further comment, and no need to take a vote, the report was **NOTED**.

30 **UPDATE ON NATIONAL PAY AWARD**

The Chair invited the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to present the final item, which was an update to the decision for the National Pay Award for 2022/23.

The Officer explained in late October 2022, a pay award was agreed, with an increase of £1925 to each salary band was implemented for the November 2022 payslips, with an additional day of annual leave implemented in April 2023. This was a bigger percentage increase for those on lower salaries.

Members also learned that the consultation for the April 2023 pay award was to begin in early February, with the East Midlands Council to take on the leadership regionally. The Officer expressed a hope for an earlier resolution, emphasising past history of these pay award negotiations.

With no need to take a vote, the report was **NOTED**.

31 **WORK PLAN**

The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services informed the Committee that the workplan for the 2022/23 Council year would be populated as and when.

Members learned that the Equality Policy Review and Update was to be discussed the next scheduled meeting of the Committee. This was to be led by Katy Allen, the Corporate Governance Officer, in lieu of the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services.

With no further comments from Members of the Committee, the Work Plan as at 11 January 2023 was **NOTED**.

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

The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services explained that this meeting was to be her last Joint Staff Consultative Committee meeting, and that the incoming Interim Assistant Director was to act as the Lead Officer for the Committee, with the support of the Human Resources Manager.

The Vice Chairman, in the Chair, thanked Emma Redwood for her work and leadership as the Lead Officer for the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

The date and time of the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to be held at 4pm on Thursday, 30 March 2023, was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.

Chairman