

**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 06 July 2017 commencing at 4.00pm.

**Present:** Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor David Cotton (appointed as Chairman)  
Councillor Jessie Milne

**Representatives of Union members:** Diane Leslie

**Representatives of Non-union staff:** Kate Hearn  
Rachel Parkin (appointed as Vice-Chairman)

**In attendance:** Lesley Beevers - Public Protection  
Jana Randle - Governance and Civic Officer  
Emma Redwood -Team Manager People and Organisational Development

**Apologies:** Deborah Chapman – Union Member Representative  
Alan Robinson - Monitoring Officer

**1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/18 CIVIC YEAR**

The Team Manager for People and Organisational Development opened the meeting and sought nominations for the position of Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor David Cotton be appointed as Chairman for the 2017/18 Civic Year.

Councillor David Cotton thanked the Committee for nominating him as Chairman and took the chair.

The Chairman placed on record his thanks to the previous Vice-Chairman, Karen Lond, who recently took a voluntary redundancy, for all her hard work and dedication whilst on the committee.

**2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/2018 CIVIC YEAR.**

Nominations were sought and received for the position of Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that Rachel Parkin be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the 2017/18 Civic Year.

The Chairman congratulated her on her appointment.

### **3 MINUTES (JSCC.01 17/18)**

#### **Meeting held on 30 March 2017**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 30 March 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

A short discussion took place as to who should sign the Minutes as the 30 March 2017 meeting was chaired by the previous Vice-Chairman, Karen Lond, who had since left the Council.

It was agreed that the Minutes were to be signed by the newly appointed Chairman and counter-signed by the newly appointed Vice-Chairman who attended the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017 meeting.

### **4 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **5 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE (JSCC.02 17/18)**

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 28 June 2017.

It was noted that all actions had been completed bar one, which related to the proposed dates for JSCC Briefings being confirmed with the newly appointed Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that progress on the matters arising schedule as set out in the Matters Arising Schedule (JSCC.02 17/18) be received and noted.

### **6 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (JSCC.03 17/18)**

Members were informed that the previous Health and Safety Advisor, Kim Leith, had left the Council and was yet to be replaced. The Joint Staff Consultative committee placed on record their thanks to Kim for all her hard work and dedication shown throughout the year.

Members were asked to give consideration to the above report which aimed to provide Members, Strategic Leads, Managers and Employees with information on how health and safety was developing.

The role of safety champions was highlighted, showing how they assisted managers by carrying out inspections, identifying health and safety concerns, investigating accidents and assisting in provision of solutions.

The purpose of the report was to:

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

The report showed that accidents were recorded on Minerva (“Keep me Safe, Keep me Well” page) and accidents which were reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) were reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator. There were four reportable incidents in 2016-17. They were all over seven day injuries in Operational Services.

There had been an increase in recorded incidents in the last year but the incidents reported had not shown any clear trends.

Training was continually improving as was work on the Round Risk Assessments.

It was highlighted that the Safety Champion group remained important and that the awareness of health and safety was to continue to be a priority.

Employees benefitted from – for example:

- more comfortable chairs being provided,
- flu vaccination initiative,
- Embracing Change training, and
- fresh fruit scheme in January.

The valuable work carried out by Safety Champions was praised and it was agreed that the work should be encouraged to continue.

Members raised a number of questions regarding the above initiatives, such as the fresh fruit scheme. It was confirmed that these initiatives were funded from external funding which was now exhausted and the fresh fruit was therefore no longer issued but the initiatives were well received at the Council buildings as well as the depot.

The accident figures in paragraph 8.1 were discussed. It was noted that the accident figures were relatively low and that lessons had been learnt from the reported accidents. It was mentioned that there were a number of verbal threats to staff, both face to face and on the phone, from the customers. The highest number of accidents

occurred in the Operational Services and Central Services as shown in Fig 3 and 4 with Manhandling being the highest. These incidents related mainly to street cleaning and wheelie bins provision. The Property Damage (Fig 3) was discussed with examples being given such as damage caused by reversing vehicles.

No physical threats to operational staff had been reported. It was mentioned that there was one incident in the last month but this post-dated this report.

Members praised the street cleaners for the work they did in often very unpleasant circumstances stating that all thanks and encouragement should be given to them for their tremendous work.

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the report be supported and noted; and

(b) its content be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

## **7 FIRST AID PROCEDURE (JSCC.04 17/18)**

Members were advised that a review of the risk assessment for first aid had been carried out and procedures were produced to ensure that all were aware of their responsibilities in case of emergency.

The procedure covered first aiders, provisions, training, record keeping and employees' responsibilities.

The procedure was sent to the Health and Safety Champions and the first aiders for comments following which amendments were made.

A recent addition to the procedure was a form which could be completed by the first aiders should anyone require first aid attention which did not result from an accident/incident in connection with work. System Development were setting up an area where these could be stored confidentially on Minerva.

Members raised a question in relation to the section of the procedure relating to 'Partners', asking whether it was ensured that Partners do provide their own first aiders. It was proposed that to ensure Health and Safety compliance, the sentence relating to first aiders could be modified to show that Partners have a duty to provide their own first aiders. Alternatively, a condition could be included as part of the Tenants' agreement in relation to provision of first aiders by Partners. It was discussed that the tenants' agreement could include a checklist to check provisions were in place.

Members commented that it was a good idea to ensure that there were ethical employers in the building.

The issue of fire extinguishers and Partners was then raised and a discussion took place confirming that fire extinguishers were covered by the Tenants' agreement.

Members raised a question in relation to fire extinguishers in the Council Chamber and whether there should be some in the room (especially when the adjoining rooms were shut off). It was agreed that the current requirements in relation to positioning of the fire extinguishers for the Council Chamber were to be checked. Officers carried out an immediate check and found that there were fire extinguishers in the corridor but it still needed to be clarified whether there should be any in the Council Chamber itself.

Members asked whether the list of first aiders was up to date and whether new staff got training in first aid. It was confirmed by Officers that the list was updated recently. It was explained that most first aiders attended a one-day Emergency first aid course which was valid for three years and the training was delivered as and when needed with some more extensive training also provided for relevant areas. Regular checks were being carried out to ensure enough people were trained to provide sufficient cover.

**RESOLVED** that the procedure be supported and noted.

## **8 ANNUAL REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE (MONITORING OF SICKNESS ABSENCE) APRIL 2016 TO MARCH 2017 (JSCC.05 17/18)**

The Committee gave consideration to a report which presented an update on levels of sickness absence for West Lindsey District Council employees for the 16/17 year end position. The report also provided comparative figures from previous years and comparative benchmarking data.

Debate ensued in relation to the high figure of 9.22 days of absence per FTE in March 16/17. It was explained that there had been a number of long term sickness absences which had significant impact on the Cumulative Total figure but had since been resolved through ill health retirement and the figure had come down significantly since. The short term absence figures were relatively low.

The table giving a breakdown of the total absence due to stress, anxiety and depression was then discussed, pointing out that the absence related to stress, anxiety and depression was not always work related. Members highlighted that some short term absences linked to the above categories were for just a few days at a time which seemed surprising. Officers explained that one reason for this could have been that the categorisation of the absence was dependent on how people entered it on the electronic system which not always identified the actual causes and only one reason could be selected where there may have been a number of issues.

Members commented that there did not seem to be any particular pattern emerging in relation to seasonal trends. The figure relating to the percentage of total absence due to stress, anxiety, depression in August 2013/14 was 50.6% which was unusually high and speculations were made whether this could have been linked to a something that was going on at the workplace at the time such as a restructure

during which people may have been fearful to take time off work. It was discussed that there was still a stigma nationally about mental health reporting and issues may therefore not be identified as mental health.

The categorisation of reasons for absence was then discussed stating that the category would often be chosen by a manager or following a back to work interview with the employee and what people said might not always reflected the real reasons for absence.

The absence information for Operational and Non-Operational based staff shown at paragraph 5.1 was then debated. The average FTE for the council for the 2016/17 period was 236.82 FTE with average FTE for the depot being 55.98 (23.6% of workforce). The figure showed that despite the depot being only around a quarter of the workforce, at times, they would account for 50-60% of absences.

A representative of non-union staff asked whether the Council benchmark against others. The Team Manager for People and Organisational Development agreed that this would be a worthwhile exercise and that she would obtain figures in relation to operational services for comparison. Members recommended to carry this out for a couple of years. Members wished to know whether getting the Absence split data required a lot of time but were assured that as a template had been developed and was in use, it was manageable.

The HR support at the depots was debated with the reasons being sought for visits to the Market Rasen depot being on a monthly basis only. Members questioned whether a fortnightly visit would be worthwhile. It was clarified that there was no staff present at the depot and the visits were therefore arranged around their meetings. UNISON were also available to offer support for staff at the depot.

Members and Officers agreed that WLDC was a caring council and would support people through illness, including terminal illness.

The attached CIPD graph was included to show national context and to highlight issues such as high occurrences of 'presenteeism' (working when unwell) due to fear of staying off work when ill.

**RESOLVED** that

the levels of sickness absence for the year April 2016 to March 2017 be noted.

**9 WORK PLAN (JSCC.06 17/18)**

Members gave consideration to their future Work Plan. The Work Plan had only four reports on it at the time which were all listed for September 2017. Officers highlighted recent staffing issues relating to new staff having been appointed recently as cover for maternity leave. Officers undertook to populate the Work Plan further once staff had been trained.

The Disciplinary Rules Procedure was due to be reviewed (due in September).

Some work was undertaken in relation to the Accident Procedure by the Health and Safety Adviser but following her departure, new staff member were yet to be appointed to complete it. It was stated that health and safety needed to be embedded and maintained with quarterly meetings to be held and any Health and Safety Champions who left were to be replaced.

Members and Officers commented that a lot of policies had been reviewed in the last couple of years with a number of new policies being added (such as the introduction of the shared parental leave introduced recently).

Brexit impact was to be monitored in relation to any employment law changes.

**RESOLVED** that the Work Plan, as set out in report JSCC.06 17/18 be received and noted.

## **10 BRIEFING DATES FOR THE 2017/18 CIVIC YEAR**

The proposed Briefing dates were confirmed with the newly appointed Chairman as listed on the 6<sup>th</sup> July meeting Agenda.

The meeting closed at 4.52 pm.

Chairman