

**WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the MS Teams on Thursday, 5 September 2024 commencing at 4.00 pm.

**Members:** Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway (Chairman)  
Councillor John Barrett  
Councillor Moira Westley

**Representatives of Non-union staff:** James Deacon (Vice Chairman)  
Amy Potts  
Brad Bishell  
Tom Duffield

**In attendance:** Emma Foy, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151  
Lisa Langdon, Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)  
Lynne Thomsett, People Services Manager  
Ele Snow, Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Matthew Boles

**1 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE CIVIC YEAR**

The Senior Democratic and Civic Officer opened the meeting and sought nominations for the position of Chairman.

With one nominee being proposed and seconded, the vote was taken and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Jackie Brockway be elected as Chairman for the 2024/25 Civic Year.

Councillor Brockway thanked the Committee for electing her as Chairman and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**2 TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE CIVIC YEAR**

The Chairman sought nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. With one nomination being received, the Chairman took the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that James Deacon be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the 2024/25 Civic Year.

### 3 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 4 MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 28 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

### 5 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

There were no outstanding Matters Arising.

### 6 AGILE WORKING POLICY

The Committee heard from the People Services Manager regarding the introduction of the Agile working Policy. She explained that during March 2024, the People Services Team facilitated a number of staff engagement workshops in person and virtually across the workforce, with a total of 73 employees attending. A questionnaire was also available for staff to complete, this was available on the staff intranet site and promoted through weekly messages, with 125 employees responding.

On 6 April 2024, new legislation was introduced which provided all workers with a right to request flexible employment from day one of their employment. Acas published a guide to accompany this legislation which included the following examples: part-time working, home working, hybrid working, flexitime, compressed hours, job-sharing. The themes of flexible working covered the times that people work and place of work. It was highlighted that since the pandemic and improvements in technology, agile working arrangements had become more accessible to the workforce and many jobs were now no longer place or time dependant. Many roles across the council were required to work outside of normal working hours, for example evening meetings, site visits or other events, and it was recognised that working in this way ensured that those critical activities were supported.

The Committee heard that the policy focussed on organisational outcomes, manager responsibilities and the expectations of West Lindsey District Council employees. For example, all employees would maintain a contractual work base, i.e. Guildhall, Caenby Corner Depot, Trinity Arts Centre or Lea Fields Crematorium. It was recommended that teams completed a Team Charter document, setting out clear operating days and times, meeting arrangements and assurance that wellbeing needs were met.

It was highlighted that there were many equality benefits to agile working, for example supporting those with caring responsibilities or their own health

needs. Concerns raised through the consultation period had included the financial and time costs of commuting, including fuel and parking, as well as some feeling the configuration of working space in the Guildhall could be improved. Staff members felt certain aspects should be in person, such as 1-2-1s or team meetings, and there had been an agreement that additional guidelines regarding the use of MS Teams would be helpful.

The Committee had been provided with a map showing where employees of the council lived, demonstrating that some did not live within the district. It was explained that often, the roles filled by people living further afield were typically difficult to recruit to. It was summarised that the requirement for the Agile Working Policy was indicative of the new world of work, including recruitment challenges, and reflective of how the council had operated over the previous few years.

Members were supportive of the need for the policy as well as the content of the policy itself. In response to a question relating to the risk of employees being liable for capital gains tax, it was confirmed that contractually employees would have a nominated work base meaning there was no capital gains tax liability.

In response to questions relating to managing the health and wellbeing of staff, it was explained that expectations on Team Managers were the same as they had been when everyone worked in the office. There were established ways of keeping in touch with people, such as team 'all in' days, informal catch ups, general check ins. If someone was to be showing signs of struggling, the manager would approach that conversation with them, support would be offered, options explored, Occupational Health could be involved. The expectation of managing staff wellbeing was as much a part of the manager role as it had always been.

There was widespread support for the need to prioritise informal interactions as well as the formal business, for example having dedicated time at the start of meetings to chat together, and using time in the office to build and maintain inter-team relationships, especially with new starters since the pandemic who may not have had the option to meet many people in person.

With regards to the introduction of guidance notes for the use of MS Teams, it was acknowledged that certain expectations, such as keeping cameras on or using a suitable background, had not been specified at the start of reliance on MS Teams, so the introduction now of those organisation-wide expectations and guidelines would help manage any issues that may otherwise arise.

In relation to staff feedback that the current layout of the Guildhall space was not always conducive to team needs, Members commented on alternative options, for example soundproof pods for in person 1-2-1s, or changes to the desk booking system for teams to use. It was widely acknowledged that there had been many changes in the use of the Guildhall over the previous 10 years, with options to be considered for team use.

With no further comments, the recommendation contained within the report was duly proposed and seconded, and, on taking the vote it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the Agile Working Policy had been duly considered and it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

7 **WORK PLAN**

It was explained that whilst there were no items currently scheduled for future meetings, this would be amended and the work plan would be shared with Committee Members in due course.

8 **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, 10 October 2024, via MS Teams, was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm.

Chairman