

## **JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at Worksop Town Hall**

#### **Present:**

##### **Employer's Representatives:**

Councillors C Entwistle, J Evans, D G Pidwell and J White.

##### **Employee Representatives:**

K Circuit (Vice-chair in chair), R Parr, P Rodgers and T Walstow; also A Smith (observer).

**Officers in attendance:** K Childs, J Hamilton and R Theakstone (Agenda Item Nos. 6(a), 6(b) and 8(a) only).

(Meeting commenced at 3.10pm.)

(The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and read out the Fire Alarm/Evacuation Procedure. He also enquired as to whether any member of the public wished to film/record the meeting or any part thereof; however, there were no members of public present.)

#### **34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M T Gray and S A Greaves.

#### **35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

##### **(a) Members**

There were no declarations by Members.

##### **(b) Officers**

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

#### **36. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015 be approved.

#### **37. MINUTES FOR ACTION**

Members were advised that bicycle storage is to be provided at Queen's Buildings, although there will not be any provision for shower facilities as additional funding would be required.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes for Action be received.

#### **38. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST**

**RESOLVED** that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

## **SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC**

### **Key Decisions**

None.

### **Other Decisions**

#### **39. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **(a) Hate Crime Policy**

Members were presented with a proposed Hate Crime Policy which will be presented to Cabinet for approval once finalised. The draft Policy was appended to the report for comments from members of the Joint Employee Council.

A model policy had been produced by the Hate Crime Executive Group for all local authorities in Nottinghamshire to adapt, and subsequently adopt, as a result of their commitment to a 'Hate Crime Pledge' for Nottinghamshire.

A further initiative is that 'Prevent' training is mandatory for all employees of local authorities, and this has already been undertaken by Bassetlaw District Council employees.

**RESOLVED** that the draft Hate Crime Policy, as appended to the report, be noted.

#### **40. CHANGE OF AGENDA ORDER**

To accommodate the attendance of the Director of Corporate Resources, it was proposed that Agenda Item No. 8(a) – Queen's Buildings, Security, be brought forward.

**RESOLVED** that Agenda Item No. 8(a) – Queen's Buildings, Security, be brought forward on the Agenda.

#### **41. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No.8(a) – Queen's Buildings - Security – Paragraph 1

## **SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE**

### **Key Decisions**

None.

### **Other Decisions**

#### **42. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **(a) Queen's Buildings - Security**

Members were informed of the health and safety concerns of staff with regard to the recent vandalism at Queen's Buildings and potential flaws with security were highlighted. These

issues had been raised with the Director of Corporate Resources who had given a very comprehensive response highlighting proposed and implemented actions, and these were listed at Paragraph 3.5 of the report.

Implications of the recent vandalism and their impact on employees was discussed, together with remedial action being taken to assist both management and employees.

**RESOLVED** that the position and acting being taken to prevent further acts of vandalism in Queen's Buildings be noted.

## **SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC**

### **Key Decisions**

None.

### **Other Decisions**

#### **43. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **(a) Queen's Buildings Project**

The Director of Corporate Resources updated members of the Joint Employee Council on the Queen's Buildings project, as follows:

- There is a security presence from 7.30am and the building is alarmed from 7.30pm.
- The entrance lobby area is not yet complete.
- The ground floor is complete and it is now 12 months since the DWP took occupation.
- Staff from the first floor have been moved to the portakabins in the courtyard.
- The DWP Fraud Team occupies the first self-contained office on the first floor.
- The rest of the first floor has been emptied and inner walls removed, ready for cabling/electrical/telephony works.
- Desks have been ordered and the first floor should be ready for occupation by April.
- The Heads of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods are drafting the layout for the first floor.
- Staff from the second floor will then decant to the portakabins for work to commence on the second floor.
- The third floor will follow, with completion of the project by the end of the 2016/17 financial year.

The issue of storage was raised by an Employee Representative as certain files must legally be retained for six years.

The Director of Corporate Resources reported that some storage is available but needs to be factored in when drafting layouts for each floor. Scanning and archiving documents is being pursued. Storage is also available at external locations e.g. 73 Bridge Street, although other locations are not particularly suitable e.g. Brewery Yard.

The Chair thanked the Director of Corporate Resources for the update.

**RESOLVED** that the update on the Queen's Buildings project be noted.

##### **(b) Employee Survey Results 2015/16**

Members were presented with the results of the 2015/16 Employee Survey which incorporated questions to measure workplace stress. The 2015/16 followed a similar

format to that adopted in 2012/13 and had a 58.2% response rate. Results of the survey were appended to the report.

The survey shows a positive and pleasing trend with the majority of areas showing an improvement, reinforcing the findings of the Peer Review undertaken in October 2014.

Comments and suggestions were invited from members of the Joint Employee Council which will inform further discussions about the outcomes and actions. The Chair commented that the results were positive.

Actions and timescales to address specific areas of concern will be discussed by Management Team and regular joint HR and trade union meetings. It was noted that a similar survey will be undertaken in 2-3 years.

**RESOLVED** that the results of the employee survey be noted.

(c) Managing Employee Health and Wellbeing

Members were updated on sickness absence management and monitoring, progress with the implementation of the revised Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure, and existing and proposed measures in support of promoting employee health and wellbeing.

The outturn for the 2014/15 year was reported as 12.49 days per FTE, against a target of 8 days. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, the figure stood at 9.66 days per FTE. Although both long-term and short-term absence has increased, no specific underlying reasons have been identified for the higher absence levels. There were a number of unfortunate but unrelated serious health issues and (non-work) accidents that significantly contributed to the figures.

A raft of measures has been introduced to assist the Council's approach to promoting health and wellbeing, and these were listed at Paragraph 3.7 of the report. To further support staff and ensure effective management of health issues, measures are being considered and these were outlined at Paragraph 3.9 of the report. Initiatives supported by Management Team will be introduced in accordance with the availability of resourcing. Monitoring of sickness absence will continue, and will be reported and communicated via established reporting mechanisms.

Issues raised/discussed by Employee Representatives and elected Members included:

- Mental health issues
- Initiatives to reduce musculoskeletal injuries/absences
- Comparison with neighbouring local authorities
- Impact of increased workloads/reducing resources
- Pre-employment medical assessments and possible adjustments for medical conditions
- Ageing workforce

It was noted that a Health and Wellbeing event is proposed for the Council's workforce, and it was suggested that sessions should be held at different locations and at different times to allow for all employees to attend.

**RESOLVED** that the report on sickness absence management be noted and the Council's approach to health and wellbeing matters be supported.

44. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

**RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No.7(a) – Review of Agency Workers – Paragraph 4

Agenda Item No. 7(b) – Pay and Grading Review – Paragraph 4

## **SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE**

### **Key Decisions**

None.

### **Other Decisions**

#### **45. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES**

##### **(a) Agency Workers**

Members were updated on the use of agency workers and consultants for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, with the data being appended to the report. Additional information was verbally reported.

The data and particular incidences were discussed by Employee Representatives and elected Members. It was noted that the costs of employing both agency workers and consultants are not yet known.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The report on the use of agency workers and consultants be noted.
2. In order to seek to reduce the incidence of agency workers, managers be required to complete the quarterly monitoring form and data be reported to the Joint Employee Council.

##### **(b) Pay and Grading Review**

Members were updated on progress against the timetable for the completion of the Pay and Grading Review.

The HR Service Manager reported that the project is on track and the timetable, together with comments on progress to date, was outlined at Paragraph 3.2 of the report. A list of communications on the project was also listed at Paragraph 3.4 of the report. An update was given to all employees in January 2016 and the next one is scheduled for March 2016.

**RESOLVED** that the update on the Pay and Grading Review be noted.

#### **46. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

As there was no other urgent business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Meeting closed at 4.45pm.)