

JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12th March 2013 at Worksop Town Hall

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Councillor G Wynne (Chairman for the meeting)
Councillors C Entwistle, S May, D R Pressley and J B Rickells

Employee Representatives:

P Rodgers and J Rose

Officers in attendance: D Armiger, C Crossland and L Hull

ACTION BY:

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and read out the Fire Alarm/Evacuation Procedure.)

33. NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor G Wynne be elected Chairman for the meeting.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Greaves and Employee Representative, K Circuit.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

There were no declarations of interest by Members.

(b) Officers

There were no declarations of interest by officers.

36. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2012

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th Decmeber 2012 be approved.

37. MINUTES FOR ACTION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action be received.

38. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

In relation to Outstanding Minute Number 10(a), Review of Agency Workers, the Head of Human Resources advised that he has met with K Circuit regarding undertaking an exercise to look at the number of consultants. They have agreed to meet on a monthly basis and report any concerns to the Joint Employee Council.

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

39. CHANGE OF AGENDA ORDER

The Chairman advised a change in Agenda order so that Items No. 7, Items for Discussion in Private, would be considered first.

40. 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 agree that the following items of business involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1, 2 and 4, and, therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item 7(a) – Staff Car Parking – Paragraphs 1 and 2
Agenda Item 7(b) – Living Wage Supplement – Paragraph 4
Agenda Item 7(c) – Review of Agency Workers – Paragraph 4

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

41. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYERS REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Staff Car Parking

Members were presented with a report which outlined proposed changes to staff car parking. The Head of Community Prosperity advised that following discussions with the trade unions it is proposed to defer the report to the next meeting of the Joint Employee Council after further consultation has taken place.

RESOLVED that the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Joint Employee Council to give the unions the opportunity to consult members.

(b) Living Wage Supplement

Members were presented with a report which outlined the proposed adoption of a Living Wage supplement to enhance pay rates for staff earning below the living wage. The Living Wage is different from the minimum wage; it is a discretionary scheme and is a subjective value test to define to socially acceptable minimum standard of living for workers and their families.

Members commended the proposal.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and the adoption of a Living Wage Supplement, effective from 1st April be recommended to Cabinet.

(c) Review of Agency Workers

The Joint Employee Council were updated on the use of agency workers for the period 1st October 2012 to 31 December 2012.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

42. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Employee Suggestion Scheme

Members were presented with a draft proposed Employee Suggestion Scheme and were asked to comment. A revised Employee Suggestion Scheme has been developed to encourage improvements in delivery of Council services. Three types of awards were proposed, the rewards have yet to be determined. The Head of Human Resources suggested that the reward could be in the form of vouchers or annual leave. The Head of Human Resources advised that he would like a union representative on the assessment panel.

Members commented that the scheme is a good idea and that employees have good ideas which should be valued and recognised. It was suggested that a ceremony could be held annually to recognise Valued Awards. Members suggested that employees with 100% attendance could also be acknowledged at the ceremony.

RESOLVED that the Scheme be finalised and a further report be submitted to the next Joint Employee Council to recommend the final version of the Scheme to Cabinet for approval.

(b) Annual Leave Policy and Procedure

Members were presented with the proposed Annual Leave Policy and Procedure. The Policy details the management of annual leave which reflects employment legislation and recent case law and provides clarity for employees and managers. Recent case law with regard to long term sickness has established principles in relation to statutory leave.

RESOLVED that the Annual Leave Policy and Procedure be referred to Cabinet for adoption, with an implementation date of 1st April 2013 to co-ordinate with the new leave year. This will ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations in relation to annual leave and sickness, whilst mitigating the financial cost burned associated with the changes.

(c) Employee Survey Results – 2012/13

Members were presented with the results of the 2012 corporate wide Employee Attitude Survey and were invited to make comments/ suggestions to feed into the responding action plan. The survey was sent to all employees and 62.5% of employees responded. The majority of results were positive; there was similarity to some of the outcomes of the latest Investors in People (IIP) Assessment in terms of improvement areas and actions.

Members highlighted areas of concern: appraisals; team briefs; training; and the weekly newsletter. Members felt that different areas of the Council working together needed improvement.

The Head of Human Resources advised that similarly to the outcome of the IIP assessment appraisals are a concern and Managers will be supported to ensure that they complete the appraisal process in a timely manner. He advised that the appraisal round has commenced and suggested that an update report be presented to the next meeting giving a general summary and outlining how they are fed into training and service delivery plans.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The Communications Manager advise Members in relation to the staff weekly newsletter and the possibility of the newsletter being sent to all employees with an option to unsubscribe if an employee wishes to.
3. A report be presented to the next meeting in relation to the 2013 appraisal round.

(d) Appeals Procedure

Members were presented with a report which proposed to review the working of the Appeals Procedure which was adopted in 2011. Members were asked to consider the Appeals procedure and comment as appropriate as part of the review process.

The Chairman advised that the review is timely as it has been proposed to revert to the previous appeals procedure which allowed Members to sit on the Appeals Panel. This will hopefully be presented to the Council AGM in May and amended in the constitution.

Employee representatives commented that currently the Chief Executive and a Director sit on the Panel and they would feel more comfortable with Councillors sitting on the panel as they have a neutral view.

RESOLVED that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Employee Council and bringing forward the conclusions of the Appeal Procedure review.

(e) Social Media Policy

Members were presented with the proposed Social Media Policy for use by all employees of the Council to ensure they are aware of the requirements when using social media. Social media is changing the shape of communication and is already used by sections of the Council to engage with residents. It is important that the Council has a policy in place, based upon the principles and requirements of the Harassment and Bullying Policy. The Authority is entitled to take action against an employee who brings their employer into disrepute.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the Social Media Policy be referred to Cabinet for adoption.

43. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other urgent business to discuss, the Chairman closed the meeting.