

JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th June 2015 at Worksop Town Hall

Present:

Employer's Representatives:

Councillor S Greaves (Chair)
Councillors J Evans and M T Gray.

Employee Representatives:

K Circuit, P Rodgers, T Roe and T Walstow.

Officers in attendance: C Crossland, L Hull and R Theakstone (Agenda Item No. 8(a) only).

(Meeting commenced at 3.05 pm.)

(The Head of Human Recourses welcomed all to the meeting).

1. NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor S Greaves be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

2. NOMINATIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that K Circuit be elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Entwistle and D G Pidwell.

4. 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.

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 15TH JANUARY AND 2ND MARCH 2015

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 15th January and 2nd March 2015 be approved.

6. MINUTES FOR ACTION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action be received.

7. OUTSTANDING MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

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

(a) Queen's Buildings Project Update

Members were given an update of the Queen's Building Project by the Director of Corporate Resources.

Phase one of the project is now complete. The Department of Work and Pensions have now moved into the building. Comments from Council staff, the DWP and other partners have been positive. Early feedback is that the DWP are happy with the working arrangements. The Council's own employees are happy and feel less isolated on the ground floor. Security is now in place on the ground floor and is working well to manage DWP clients and co-ordinate visitors.

The lobby area has now been decorated and carpeted and will be made into a corporate seating area. The Security Guards have commented that they would like a desk in the entrance.

Risk assessments have been carried out and a fire drill will be carried in the near future now the building is fully occupied. DWP have raised the issue of a bomb drill and it would be in the interest of all staff to carry out a drill. This drill would be carried in a different way and it is currently being looked into.

In terms of issues for staff the building now opens to the public at 9.00 am instead of 8.40 am. Any issues of tailgating before opening hours need to be reported. If this becomes an issue the level of risk will be assessed and security arrangements will be looked at.

The first floor will be next part of the process as this was restricted over the election period. One option is to hire portacabins to decant staff. This would be less disruptive and would enable work to be carried out during the day which would reduce costs. A cost analysis is being undertaken.

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration will be located on the first floor. There are logistical issues for instance the need for an environmental health lab and room for building control equipment. Digitalising of records is ongoing. It is hoped that work on the first floor will commence in the next few weeks.

The cost for the first floor has been around £113,000. At least £80,000 will be paid by the DWP. The cost to the Council has been minimal there will be adequate budget for the other floors.

In response to questions raised the Director of Corporate Services advised that other options for temporary accommodation have been explored. She stressed the importance of wearing lanyards so that employees are easily identifiable. In response to issues raised she advised that these would be raised at the next Project Group meeting and urged employees

to feedback any other issues. She noted that she would ask in the next staff newsletter for staff to feedback any issues they have encountered.

The Vice-Chairman commented that overall the move has gone well and gave a special mention to the security guards who were doing an excellent job.

The Chairman thanked R Theakstone for the update.

RESOLVED that:

1. The project update be received.
2. Issues raised be fed back to the Project Group.

(b) Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure Review

Following consultation Members were presented with the revised Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure. A summary of the proposed changes and key findings from the review were outlined in the report.

The Council's existing Policy and Procedure was approved in 2002 and was in need of modernising and streamlining. Consultation has been undertaken with the trade union, managers and employees. Benchmarking has also been done against a range of organisations.

The Head of Human Resources commented on the excellent workforce and their commitment to public service. The policy tries to support employees. One of the main additions has been the introduction of phased return to work. There is now an option for discretionary leave to facilitate phased return. Following a suggestion by the trade union one procedure has been proposed instead of a separate procedure for short and long term absences.

It was noted that a consistent approach is needed across the organisation. A training programme for managers will be delivered to make sure the Policy and Procedure is effective. The trade union will also be invited to take part in the training.

It was commented that the policy has been improved and the inclusion of phased return is positive.

RESOLVED that the amended Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure be supported and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

(c) Statutory Updates – Adoption Leave; Maternity Leave; Paternity Leave; and Parental Leave

Members were presented with an information report regarding the amendments made to the Council's existing Adoption Leave, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave and Work-life Balance agreement documents, to reflect legislative changes.

The Government have brought in a number of statutory amendments which impact on the Councils documents. The documents have been reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect the new legislation.

RESOLVED that the statutory changes, as summarised within the report, and the responding impact and updates to the Council's related guidelines be noted.

(d) Statutory Shared Parental Leave – Guidance

Members were presented with the new Statutory Shared Parental Leave Guidance document which details the regulatory requirements and options available. New statutory provisions allow shared parental leave. The Guidance is legislation specific. Standard forms and letters have been developed. The report also linked to the preceding Item.

RESOLVED that the new Statutory Shared Parental Leave provisions, as addressed by the Council's new Guidance, be noted.

9. 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. 9(a) – Review of Agency Workers and Workforce Data

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

10. REPORT(S) OF THE EMPLOYERS REPRESENTATIVES

(a) Review of Agency Workers and Workforce Data

The Joint Employee Council were updated on the use of agency workers for the period 1st January 2015 to 31st March 2015. Information regarding the number of temporary staff, staff with flexible working arrangements, the number of staff employed who have been previously employed by the Council and the number of consultants during the period was circulated.

Members asked questions regarding the use of consultants and agency workers within the Regeneration service. The Head of Human Resources advised that he would find out further information and update Members.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted and option 1 be approved, to seek to reduce the incidence of agency working by requiring managers to complete the quarterly monitoring form.
2. Members be given an update on the use of consultants and agency workers within the Regeneration service.

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

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

(Meeting closed at 4.10pm)