

## **JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Worksop Town Hall**

#### **Present:**

##### Employer's Representatives:

Councillors C Entwistle, J Evans, M T Gray and J White.

##### Employee Representatives:

K Circuit (Chair)  
M Bassett, R Parr and J Whalley.

Officers in attendance: K Childs and B Pinkney.

(Meeting commenced at 3.00pm.)

(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.)

#### **30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Sanger.

#### **31. 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.

#### **32. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 be approved.

#### **33. MINUTES FOR ACTION**

In relation to Minute No. 26(a) members were advised that the policy has been agreed at Cabinet.

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

#### **34. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST**

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

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

#### **Key Decisions**

None.

## **Other Decisions**

### **35. REPORT OF THE EMPLOYER'S REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **(a) Sickness Policy and Procedure**

Members were asked to consider the revised Sickness Policy and Procedure.

Members were advised of the current policy for managing sickness: "Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure" was introduced in 2016. It had been agreed that this policy would be renewed following a year of implementation.

The Policies Working Group has undertaken the review and has taken into account any feedback received from managers.

Members were advised of the outcomes following the feedback received.

The Policy has been renamed as "Sickness Policy and Procedure" in recognition that other aspects of absence are the subject of different policies.

Questions were raised regarding taking annual leave during sick leave. It was confirmed that this is encourage when returning back to work on a phase return after long term sickness leave.

Employee Representative K Circuit raised his concern regarding the rise in sickness leave. Records of the sickness leave within different service areas from December 2017 were tabled. Members were advised that the concern had been raised at Joint Employee Council pre-agenda meeting. Following the meeting further clarification had been made regarding the procedure for sickness leave. It had been confirmed that the First Care system is used to log sickness leave; Human Resources can access these figures. Reports can be produced from the First Care system to analyse any trends that may be occurring in sickness leave.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Sickness Policy and Procedure be agreed and recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

#### **(b) Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**

Members were asked to consider the revised Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Members were advised that the Council's current Disciplinary Policy and Procedure was introduced in 2014.

It was noted that the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure is being reviewed as part of a range of measures focussed on health and wellbeing of employees. Specifically in this case, the main change introduced is the "Fast Track" procedure. This provides for non-contentious cases to be dealt with more quickly, and is suitable when:

- Dismissal is not an appropriate potential outcome, and
- the employee accepts and does not contest the allegation(s), and
- management consider that a full investigation is not necessary.

Members were advised of the other changes that have been introduced as part of the review process.

An Employee Representative raised concern regarding the Fast Track process. It was confirmed that all areas will be investigated before a case goes through the fast track procedure.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure be agreed and recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

(c) Resolution Policy and Procedure

Members were asked to consider the proposed Resolution Policy and Procedure which sets out a new approach to dealing with conflict in the workplace.

Members were advised that the Council currently has a Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure in place, which is designed to ensure that employees can raise concerns if they feel they have been bullied or harassed, and have them properly considered, investigated and addressed.

A review of cases raised under this Policy and Procedure has highlighted that, of 15 cases raised since 2004 and the present date, only one has been found to constitute harassment.

Members were advised that the Resolution Policy and Procedure is designed to enable workplace conflict to be dealt with at an early stage, and encourages staff to respond in a positive way.

The different resolution methods of the approach provided by the Resolution Policy and Procedure were outlined to members.

Members were advised that the development of the policy has been through the Policies Working Group. It is intended that this policy will replace the Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure.

Comprehensive training has been arranged for Human Resources Business Partners, Managers and Supervisors, and Trade Union Representatives. This is to help deal with conflict in the workplace whereby employees are encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for managing their own relationships.

An updated version of the Resolution Tips was tabled.

Members raised questions regarding how internal or external mediation is determined. It was confirmed that in most cases it will be internal mediation unless it is necessary to get an external mediator.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Resolution Policy and Procedure be agreed and recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

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

**Key Decisions**

None.

**Other Decisions**

**36. 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) – Pay and Grading Review – Paragraph 4

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

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

### **Key Decisions**

None.

### **Other Decisions**

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

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

Members were given an update outlining progress on the Pay and Grading Review. Members were advised of the next stages of the review.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

##### **(b) Agency Workers**

Members were updated on the use of agency workers and consultants for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The data was appended to the report with a years' worth of data for comparison.

The data was discussed by Employee Representatives and elected Members.

**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.

#### **38. 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 3.44pm.)