

JOINT EMPLOYEE COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 12th October 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), D Fretwell, P Rodgers, T Walstow and J Whalley.

Officers in attendance: K Childs and C Crossland.

(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.)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

12. 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.

13. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13TH JULY 2016

Councillor J Evans gave an update on cycle storage and security. She advised that she has looked for an appropriate location for staff cycle storage with the Principal Estates Surveyor. She advised that:

- The area containing the Caretakers Office and Mail is not suitable due to fire regulations and lack of capacity.
- The old facilities office and adjoining garage is currently used for storage.
- A temporary solution is to use the garage unit on Newgate Street Car Park for cycle storage. The unit has a high security padlock and has sufficient space to securely store a few cycles.
- The Facilities Manager has suggested that an ideal solution would be to provide a secure storage shed for 8 – 10 cycles in the corner of the courtyard; the cost would be around £4000 - £5000. This would encourage more staff to cycle to work.

The Chair thanked J Evans for the update.

RESOLVED that:

1. The update on cycle storage be received.
2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2016 be approved.

14. MINUTES FOR ACTION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action be received.

15. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PUBLIC

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

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

(a) Maternity Leave Policy – Amendment

Members were presented with a report which detailed a proposed amendment to the Council's Maternity Leave Policy document. The amendment is aimed at improving the clarity in regard to existing criteria to be met for entitlement to Occupational Maternity Pay.

The Council has an existing Policy in place which was introduced in 2003 and subsequently amended in 2007 and 2014. Although reference is made in the document regarding the need to meet any qualifying conditions such as length of service the actual length of service required to trigger additional Occupational Maternity Pay has not, to date, been explicit within the document.

Following consultation with the trade unions the document had now been amended to explicitly incorporate the 1 year length of continuous local government service requirement. The amended document was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that the amendment made to the current Maternity Policy, as summarised within the report, be noted and referred to Cabinet for approval.

(b) Redeployment Policy – Update

Members were presented with a report to inform them of proposed updates to the Council's Redeployment Policy. The amendments proposed are predominately additions in regard to the redeployment job matching process, aimed at improving transparency, clarity and reflecting practice which has been successfully trailed during recent corporate wide service reviews. The proposed additions and amendments have been subject to consultation with the trade unions. The proposed updated Policy was appended to the report.

An employee representative asked, for transparency, if employees could have access to their redeployment matching for a vacancy. The HR Service Manager commented that she felt this would be a useful introduction.

An employee representative commented that he felt an employee wishing to apply for a vacancy which was at grade maximum less than 80% of their current grade maximum should be considered for salary protection. In response the HR Service Manager advised that a vacancy at grade maximum less than 80% of their current grade maximum is not considered to be a suitable alternative. An employee can still apply for the vacancy but would know that salary protection does not apply. If there was not a suitable vacancy an employee may wish to apply for redundancy. If an employee refuses a suitable vacancy redundancy would not apply.

The Chair advised that regional advice had been sought and if salary protection was considered it could be argued the vacancy was a reasonable alternative and the employee may therefore not be eligible for redundancy.

It was noted that the document states that the Policy will be reviewed within a period of 12 months from the date of implementation.

RESOLVED that the proposed amendments made to the existing Redeployment Policy be supported and referred to Cabinet for approval.

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

None.

Other Decisions

17. 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

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

(a) 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 commented on progress to date and future timescales. Further updates will be brought to the Joint Employee Council as the project progresses.

An elected Member acknowledged the additional work the Review has placed on the HR Department and trade unions.

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

(b) Agency Workers

Members were updated on the use of agency workers and consultants for the period 1st April 2016 to 30th June 2016. The data was appended to the report with a years' worth of data for comparison.

The data and particular incidences were discussed by Employee Representatives and elected Members.

Members and Employee Representatives commented on the reduction in the number of agency workers but were still concerned regarding the length of time some agency workers are used for.

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.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

(a) Cycle to Work

An Employee Representative asked if the Cycle to Work Scheme was still being looked at. In response the HR Service Manager advised the Council were looking at a salary sacrifice scheme in general however the government are looking to scale back salary sacrifice schemes so the Council are awaiting the outcome.

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

(Meeting closed at 3.40pm.)