

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON MONDAY 18 AUGUST
2014, AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillor L Haysey (Chairman)
Councillors M Alexander, A Jackson and
J Thornton

Staff Side (UNISON)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors G McAndrew, J Ranger,
P Ruffles, N Wilson and C Woodward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Property Services
Adele Taylor	- Director of Finance and Support Services

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MINUTES - 26 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

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EXPENSES POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report

setting out the proposed key changes on the revised Expenses Policy.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the policy had been updated as part of a regular review. Additionally, an internal audit had recommended a number of revisions and more recently, the need to review the policy around casual and essential car users in the light of a recent grievance.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained the key changes to the policy, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

In response to a query from Councillor J Thornton regarding mileage rates, the Secretary to the Employer's Side confirmed that the mileage rates paid by East Herts were in accordance with a national joint council agreement. Councillor Thornton urged standardisation of the rates paid to all. The Director of Finance and Support Services explained that many Authorities had switched to paying HMRC mileage rates. No changes were proposed to the lump sum. Councillor A Jackson confirmed that Councillors were paid on the basis of HMRC rates.

In response to a query from Councillor M Alexander, the Secretary to the Employer's Side explained the mileage claim arrangement paid to those staff in relation to joint working with Stevenage Borough Council.

The Secretary to the Staff Side commented that UNISON were currently having initial discussions with the Secretary to the Employer's Side on expenses (Terms and Conditions) related issues which had a bearing on the policy before Members. The Secretary to the Employer's Side confirmed that matters had not yet progressed to formal consultation.

Councillor A Jackson suggested that if there were wider issues to consider, that it would be sensible to defer consideration of the policy until these had been resolved. He further stated that moving to HMRC mileage rates was sensible and queried why the report had been brought forward

when there were outstanding issues to resolve. The Secretary to the Employer's Side reminded Members that the Panel had asked for the policy to be submitted for consideration at its meeting on 26 June 2014.

Councillor J Ranger stated that to delay moving to HMRC rates was only delaying the inevitable and would not affect the Terms and Conditions ongoing discussions.

The Secretary to the Staff Side stated that as the policy stood, UNISON would not support it.

In response to a query from Councillor J Thornton, the Secretary to the Employer's Side stated that providing a time frame by which discussions might be concluded with UNISON would be difficult to predict.

In noting that there was no general agreement to the HMRC rates proposed, the Secretary to the Employer's Side sought confirmation from the Panel about other aspects of the report, including clarifying the process and how staff were defined as users. The Secretary to the Staff Side stated that there were other elements within the policy that UNISON were still not happy with and could not support the changes.

Mr Ellis (UNISON) referred to proposed tax changes in legislation which would positively affect Councillors.

The Secretary to the Staff Side reiterated that UNISON would not support the policy as it stood and suggested that the matter should be referred to the Joint Secretaries to mediate/advise.

The Panel supported the recommendation to refer the matter to the Joint Secretaries for East of England Regional Council to mediate/advise.

RESOLVED – that the Expenses Policy be referred to the Joint Secretaries for East of England Regional Council to mediate/advise.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am

Chairman

Date