

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 30
SEPTEMBER 2015, AT 2.30 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillors E Buckmaster, G McAndrew and
G Cutting

Staff Side (UNISON)

Andy Stevenson (Chairman), Ms F Brown

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Emma Freeman	- Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development

6 **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2019**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report setting out revisions to the Organisational Development Strategy for 2015 – 2019 which had been developed to support and complement the Council's values and priorities.

The report had been developed in consultation with senior management and UNISON.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the Council had recently been awarded an Investor's in

People (IIP) Bronze Assessment and that the new Organisational Development Strategy would assist the Council in moving towards a Silver Assessment.

In response to a query from Councillor E Buckmaster regarding staff who needed support in filling their roles, the Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the process was robust. She explained how the PDR Stage One identified needs and that Stage Two ensured that there was a link between staff performance and learning and development.

Councillor L Haysey welcomed the report adding that this was an integrated approach to ensure staff received professional support and in providing a work-life balance. In response to a further question concerning indicators for employees with disabilities, the Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that indicators were set by Human Resources (HR) Committee following an annual review in terms of the District's demographics and population changes. Work was ongoing with the Diversity Team. The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that Corporate Management Team received reports concerning monitoring and performance and statistical information was submitted quarterly to HR Committee.

Councillor G McAndrew welcomed the positive news in terms of PDR completions.

The Panel Chairman stated that Unison had worked closely with Human Resources on this issue and was pleased to see that the Council had been awarded a Bronze Assessment and thanked the Secretary to the Employer's Side for her work in the process. He welcomed further discussions with HR on the move towards a Silver Assessment and HR's aspirational intentions.

The Panel recommended to Human Resources Committee, approval of the Organisational Development Strategy 2015 –2019.

RECOMMENDED – that the Organisational Development Strategy 2015 – 2019, as now submitted, be approved.

7 PROFESSIONAL CAREER VOCATIONAL STUDY POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report setting out a revised Professional Career and Vocational Study Policy. The policy was last updated in October 2008 and had been updated to reflect current practice and to incorporate revised budget allocations for 2015/16. The Secretary to the Employer's Side summarised the key changes.

In response to a query from Councillor G Cutting regarding what opportunities were available to staff, the Secretary to the Employer's Side, by example, explained what professional courses could be undertaken adding that internally, the Council was also reviewing a management development programme leading to a qualification.

Councillor L Haysey suggested that staff successes should be celebrated with recognition in some form. This was supported. The Secretary to the Employer's Side stated that this approach could be adopted corporately in terms of succession planning.

In response to a query from Councillor E Buckmaster regarding employees who acted up in more senior positions, the Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that such staff were remunerated.

The Panel Chairman referred to his civil engineering qualifications studied over a six year period, made possible by the Professional Career Vocational Study Policy and thanked the Council for making this possible.

The Panel recommended to Human Resources Committee, approval of the revised Professional Career and Vocational Study Policy as submitted and that a

corporate approach to recognise staff successes be developed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Professional Career Vocational Study Policy, as now submitted, be approved; and

(B) a corporate approach to recognise staff successes be developed.

8 **SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report detailing a new Smoke Free Workplace Policy. At the meeting on 11 March 2015, the Local Joint Panel requested that the issue be deferred, querying the enforceability of a total ban and how this might create problems for Managers. As such it was suggested that a more positive approach to encourage employees not to smoke, was less adversarial and more supportive.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the policy had been amended to take into account the implications of a total no smoking ban; ways in which smokers could be encouraged not to smoke and how the Council could influence service providers, i.e. contractors, in enforcing a total ban. She hoped that the Council could move to a totally smoke free environment within the Council's premises from 1 January 2017.

Councillor G Cutting acknowledged the difficulties faced by smokers and stop-smoking initiatives being put in place. He expressed concern about those people visiting the Council premises and the use of e-cigarettes. The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that practical issues could be worked out with Customer Services in supporting the Health and Wellbeing agenda. She confirmed that e-cigarettes would be treated in the policy in the same way as cigarettes.

The Panel Chairman stated that Unison was involved in discussions about the proposed policy and still had

reservations, e.g. the public visiting the Council's offices, e-cigarettes (possibly being offered on prescription) and its enforceability of implementation (Manager or HR). The Chairman commented that he could foresee a situation whereby smokers might feel they were being targeted as a problem compared to those taking coffee breaks. He stated that the policy, as it stood, did not take into account possible changes in legislation with regard to e-cigarettes. The Chairman commented that Unison had asked for the report to be removed from the agenda but Corporate Management Team had requested that it go forward.

In an effort to address Unison's immediate concerns the Secretary to the Employer's Side suggested that the proposed policy be amended by the amendment of paragraph 4.3 (number of smoke breaks) and 5.2 (recording smoke breaks); with the wording to be agreed with Unison and to reflect the current policy. This was supported. Paragraph 2.5 would also refer to e-cigarettes and legislative changes.

Councillor E Buckmaster suggested that the recommendation also be amended to reflect a position that the Council was working to support a totally smoke-free environment by 1 January 2017, which would give Officers an opportunity to address areas of concern. This was supported.

The Panel recommended to Human Resources Committee, that, subject to the amendment of paragraphs 4.3 and 5.2 of the Policy, as now submitted, a move towards a totally smoke free environment by 1 January 2017 be approved.

RECOMMENDED – that subject to the amendment as now detailed, the Smoke-free Workplace Policy, and a move towards a totally smoke free environment by 1 January 2017 be approved.

9 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Jackson. It was noted that Councillor G Cutting was substituting for him.

10 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Chairman
Date