

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020, AT 12.00  
PM

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PRESENT:**Employer's Side**

Councillors M Stevenson,  
E Buckmaster, L Haysey

**Staff Side (UNISON)**

J Bruce (Chairman), N Munro, J Francis

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor R Bolton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andre Ferreira	- Democratic Services Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Emily Cordwell	- Human Resources Apprentice
Claire Kirby	- Human Resources Officer

5 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of  
Councillor Dumont and Debbie Thomas (Unison).

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting,

specifically Councillor Bolton, who was attending the meeting as an observer in her capacity as Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

The Chairman said that while last meeting of the Committee was held some time ago, in June 2019, meetings would only be held if there was a strategic reason to do so.

The Chairman conveyed her thanks to Simon O'Hear, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, for his co-operation and contribution to the good working relationship which existed between the Staff Side and the Employer Side.

## 7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In response to Councillor Buckmaster who enquired if he should declare an interest on any agenda item as his son had recently been appointed as an EHC employee, the Chairman said that this was not necessary.

## 8 MINUTES - 5 JUNE 2019

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Stevenson that the Minutes of the previous meeting be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

With reference to the Acceptable Use Policy, the Chairman said that certain arrangements, such as the use of Drop Box, had not yet been practically introduced. The Head of Human Resources and

Organisational Development said that while the Acceptable Use Policy had been implemented, there were some practical issues, mainly where the Council did not fully control the application of certain systems, but these were being reviewed. The preference was to use applications which were fully controlled by the Council.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 9 GENERAL LEAVE POLICY UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a report on the Updated General Leave Policy and the removal of the Carers Policy. He said that a review of the General Leave Policy, the Carers Policy and the Family Friendly Policy had identified that there was duplication between the Carers Policy and the other two policies.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the main issue identified related to a misalignment, in that the Carers Policy had a clear provision for eligible staff for five days paid dependency leave (further such leave would be unpaid), whereas the General Leave Policy only referred to dependency leave in the unpaid section, but did refer elsewhere to five days paid discretionary leave, with the main reason being for emergencies relating to dependents.

The Committee briefly discussed how and when dependency leave was used and the Chairman said

that the UNISON had worked closely with the Human Resources team on the exact definition of a dependant, which was now in line with statutory guidance. The aim was to ensure a consistent and fair approach across all departments.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the General Leave Policy had been updated with more detail on dependency leave, and that the policy now made it clear that line managers should consult with HR on the use of the policy. He provided examples of when dependency leave could be used, such as to support unplanned/emergency events. He emphasised that dependency leave should not be used for planned events, which should be managed through planned leave.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that once the amendments had been made and tested on MyView, the Union were fully consulted, and the policy was agreed to with a few minor amendments. The revised policy had then been published and line managers were fully briefed on the changes. To date, some requests for dependency leave had been approved, while some had been declined; managers and staff would be consistently educated on the use of dependency leave.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development provided an update on the East Herts Together Development and said that a group had now been established, with representatives from all services being invited to the first full meeting.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development explained why the group had been formed and what matters which they would consider. Some initial “quick-wins” were identified, which included supporting staff to use the MiCollab telephone system; consistent use of the Outlook calendar; the use of a standard e-mail signature; and the uploading of officer photographs to corporate systems.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that consistency was very important and referred to standardised voicemail messages as an example.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said there was still some frustration that not all staff were consistent when using Outlook. Details of policies would be rolled-out to all staff and any amendments would be submitted to the Local Joint Panel. No management training would take place until all policies had been approved and put in place so that they could be used as part of the training.

Councillor Haysey said that the request to upload photographs would also apply to Councillors and she had asked Members to do this by Friday 14 February 2020. She would give feedback on her request to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Democratic Services.

*(Note from Democratic Services: Councillor Haysey was informed post-meeting that only Members could upload their photographs to their Outlook accounts as only account holders could do this. Members were also informed via the weekly Members' Information Bulletin*

*how this could be done.)*

It was proposed by Jenny Francis and seconded by Councillor Haysey that the Panel note the recommendations in the report and the update on the East Herts Together Development Group. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the Motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Panel note the:

(a) updated General Leave Policy which had been published on the intranet in January 2020;

(b) removal of Carers Policy from January 2020 (which duplicated sections of the General Leave Policy and the Family Friendly policy which had caused confusion); and

(c) update on the East Herts Together Policy Development Group.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....