

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 31 JULY
2024, AT 12.00 PM

PRESENT: J Bruce (Chair)
Councillors E Buckmaster, A Daar,
J Dumont, S Forde and J Morris

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Alex Wanless	- Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development)

111 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Hilary Marsh and Councillor D Hollebon. Jordan Morris was substituting for Hilary Marsh.

112 MINUTES - 21 MAY 2024

It was moved by Councillor Daar and seconded by Councillor Dumont that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Panel held on 21 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillor E Buckmaster and Jordan Morris abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Local Joint Panel held on 21 May 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

113 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded participants to use their microphones when speaking. She said that Paul Stevens, who was a valued member of the Panel and of Unison, had recently passed away. She said that her thoughts were with Paul's family and friends at this sad time.

The Chair introduced Jordan Morris, who was substituting at the meeting for Hilary Marsh, and said that he would be a permanent Panel member going forward following Paul Stevens' passing.

The Chair apologised for the supplementary agenda which contained a revised version of the BEAM Volunteering Policy. She explained that this was due to the correction of errors and formatting which were unable to be made by the publication deadline.

114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

115 REPORTS BY THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE

There were no reports from the Employer's Side

115 BEAM VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager introduced the report. He said that the BEAM Volunteering Policy was approved at the meeting of the Human Resources Committee on 5 June 2024, but Members had raised concerns which had required further consideration by the BEAM management team.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that the issues and questions raised by the Members of the Human Resources Committee had now

been consulted upon, with the inclusion of Unison. He said that it was important that the language used within the policy referred to volunteers and not employees, and he welcomed any further comments or questions from the Panel.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that he had read the minutes from the Panel's previous meeting, and the revised policy. He said that as the portfolio holder for the previous administration he understood the importance of volunteers for BEAM, and the fine line between a volunteer and an employee. He asked if more tweaks to the policy would be made as the new facility opened.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that as the reopening of the facility was in its infancy, further changes to the policy would have to be made. He said that BEAM now had a similar number of volunteers as before it's rebuild, with interviews and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks having taken place.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that the next phase was to engage casual workers at BEAM.

Councillor E Buckmaster asked how casual workers were differentiated from volunteers.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that casual workers were generally technicians who would go through a recruitment process and be paid, thus giving a clear line.

Jackie Bruce said that casual staff would be those workers who had a technical skill, i.e., light riggers, who were not required by BEAM on a full-time basis to do their specific job.

Jackie Bruce said that the Human Resources Committee had questioned why BEAM was not engaging volunteers

under eighteen years of age. She said that work had since been carried out with six formers from local schools and drama clubs, and that potentially this could happen next year. She said that any such change would be brought back to the Panel/ Human Resources Committee.

Sharon Forde said that it was good practice for volunteers to never be out of pocket, i.e., with travel expenses, parking fees and lunch if they worked over a certain time. She said that if such expenses were not paid this could exclude certain people, adding that volunteering could help the unemployed back into work.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that volunteers' expenses had been explored and discussed with Unison. He said that it was a difficult area, which did raise tax implications.

Councillor Daar said that she had worked as a volunteer manager, and that it was not possible to give regular lunches or lunch vouchers to volunteers. She said that travel and car parking fees could be reimbursed, and referenced paragraph 16.0 of the policy which detailed recognition and benefits for BEAM volunteers.

Jackie Bruce said that paragraph 16.0 did allude to the payment of expenses, which could be developed further.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that volunteering was a good social mobility tool, but the payment of expenses would have financial implications. He said that he would go back to the operations team with the Panel's feedback.

Councillor Dumont said that more thought and work was needed to form an expenses policy, which was both compliant with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and which set out the procedure for claiming. He added that 'benefits' were normally taxable.

Councillor Dumont asked to what degree the recent

changes to employment law would impact the Council.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that the changes announced in the July King's Speech would affect many of Human Resources' policies, with work within the team to prioritise the most urgent and educate managers. He said that the Panel was likely to be busy as a consequence of these changes.

Councillor E Buckmaster said that it was important that volunteers received training and asked for clarification regarding the online training mentioned within the policy.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager said that discussions around volunteers having access to the Council's e-learning platform were ongoing. He said that volunteer inductions would be held at BEAM itself, and that the Council's Health and Safety Officer was very proactive, supporting hands on training were role appropriate.

It was moved by Councillor E Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Daar, that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the updated BEAM Volunteering Policy be recommended to the Human Resources Committee for approval.

116 REPORTS BY THE STAFF SIDE

There were no reports from the Staff Side.

117 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 12.23 pm

Chairman

Date