

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,  
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH  
2015, AT 2.30 PM

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**PRESENT:**    **Employer's Side**

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

**Staff Side (UNISON)**

Mr S Ellis and Mr A Stevenson

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Councillor J Ranger

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Lorraine Blackburn | - Democratic Services Officer          |
| Vicki David        | - Human Resources Officer              |
| Emma Freeman       | - Head of People and Property Services |

16    **JOB EVALUATION POLICY**

**The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report setting out changes to the Job Evaluation Policy, which had been last reviewed in July 2011. The policy had been reviewed following feedback gained from the Job Evaluation Panel, Unison and suggestions made via the Here to Help programme. A summary of the main findings of the review were set out in the report now submitted. The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that revisions had been made to ensure transparency of decision making and a consistent**

approach to the process.

The Secretary to the Staff Side acknowledged the importance of the Job Evaluation process and supported the need to keep the process “in house”. He expressed concern that last year, the process had been breached in that the Council had employed external evaluators in relation to a senior management structure involving the appointment of new Heads of Service and that Unison had been advised that the process had been externalised because of a “conflict of interest”. The Secretary to the Staff Side stated that the Council was recruiting new Heads of Service without consultation with Unison and that Unison should be consulted to evaluate why a Head of Service post was being recruited when lower graded jobs were not being filled.

The Secretary to the Employer’s Side explained that the Job Evaluation Panel would now decide whether posts needed to go out for external evaluation. Councillor J Ranger stated that sometimes, external evaluation was necessary in order to gain particular expertise which could not be provided “in house”. The current process whereby Directors or Heads of Service made a business case to Corporate Management Team (CMT) before recruiting was explained.

The Secretary to the Employer’s Side suggested that paragraph 3.2 be amended by the insertion of “by the Panel” after “evaluation”. This was supported.

The Chairman stated that the new policy would clarify the process, make it fairer and more transparent.

The Secretary to the Staff Side sought assurances that the policy would be adhered to. This was provided.

The Secretary to the Staff Side expressed concern regarding the wording of paragraph 4.5 of the policy regarding evaluators and suggested that the second sentence be deleted. This was supported.

The Secretary to the Staff Side referred to paragraph 5.10 and suggested that to support transparency of decision making, a form be adapted to reflect the Panel's decision when no unanimous agreement had been reached. This was supported.

The Panel recommended approval of the report, as amended.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Job Evaluation Policy as now amended, be approved.

17 **FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICY**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report on a revised Family Friendly Policy (formerly known as the Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy) which had been updated to reflect changes in employment law legislation effective from 5 April 2015.

The Panel recommended approval of the report.

**RECOMMENDED** – that the Family Friendly Policy, as now submitted, be approved.

18 **SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report on a new policy on Shared Parental Leave which encompassed a number of changes to employment law effective from 5 April 2015. The Secretary to the Employer's Side summarised the key changes to the policy, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

Councillor M Alexander commented that there was no reference in the policy to fostering arrangements. Councillor A Jackson stated that the policy should be all inclusive and referred to the County Council's "push" in relation to encouraging fostering. The Secretary to the Employer's Side stated that it was necessary to have a policy in place and undertook to review fostering

**arrangements in other Authorities and report back to the Panel. This was supported.**

**The Panel recommended approval of the report and that the Secretary to the Employer's Side review fostering arrangements in other Authorities and report back to the Panel.**

**RECOMMENDED – (A) that the Shared Parental Leave Policy, as now submitted, be approved; and**

**(B) the Secretary to the Employer's Side review fostering arrangements in other Authorities and report back to the Local Joint Panel.**

19 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Fiona Brown (Unison).

20 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that there were no reports from the Secretary to the Staff Side to consider.

22 SMOKE FREE POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report on a revised Smoke-free Workplace Policy which had been last reviewed in 2007. She explained that the policy had been updated to support the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018 and feedback received through managers and the Here to Help programme. The Secretary to the Employer's Side outlined the key changes which effectively introduced a totally smoke-free environment.

The Chairman was pleased to see the policy encompassing the Council's health and wellbeing policies.

The Secretary to the Staff Side expressed concern that the policy had changed substantially to a proposed total ban on smoking following its submission to Corporate Management Team. He queried its enforceability and how this might, from a wider perspective, create problems for managers, i.e. managing people taking excessively long coffee breaks, etc. The Secretary to the Staff Side suggested that a more positive approach to encourage staff not to smoke was less adversarial and more supportive.

Members debated the potential problems of managing an outright ban within Council boundaries and its legal obligations and enforcement in relation to third parties and customers using its services and facilities.

The Chairman suggested that the matter be deferred to enable the Secretary to the Employer's Side to:-

- review the implications of a total no smoking ban;
- consider 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.

RESOLVED – that the matter be deferred to enable the Secretary to the Employer's Side to:

- review the implications of a total no smoking ban;
- consider 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.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Councillors J Ranger and M Alexander for their considerable contribution to the work of the Council and wished them well for the future.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

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| Chairman ..... |
| Date .....     |