

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2016,
AT 2.30 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillor Eric Buckmaster (Chairman)
Councillors A Jackson and G Cutting

Staff Side (UNISON)

Mr S Ellis and Mr A Stevenson

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors C Woodward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

1 **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report on proposed changes to a new **Absence Management Policy**. She summarised key changes which now allowed managers more discretion in dealing with absence issues at an earlier stage, including changes to the informal meeting process and those returning to work. It was noted that the revised report now incorporated stress management issues and guidance and also included new guidance on managing employees / family members with cancer and critical illnesses.

The Secretary to the Employer's Side explained that the Absence Management Policy had been amended following feedback from Heads of Service and staff. UNISON explained that they had been working closely with the Secretary to the Employer's Side and generally supported the revised absence Management Policy. UNISON requested that paragraph 15.2 be amended by the inclusion of the wording "HR will monitor vacancies over a period as identified within the Redeployment Policy". This was supported.

Councillor A Jackson commented on the positive short-term and long term absence figures referred to by the Secretary to the Employers Side in her introduction and agreed that the revised policy highlighted a more appropriate, supportive and caring role that the Council should take with regard to staff and their family member who may be suffering from a critical illness.

Councillor C Woodward sought and was provided with clarification in relation to staff involved with dismissal and the appeal process. He also suggested that paragraph 14.7 be amended by the deletion of "contractual sick pay" and the insertion of "sickness benefit" as this was more in keeping with HR employment practices. This was supported.

The Panel considered the arrangements regarding unauthorised absence and the timeframe around having to advise their manager of an absence. In view of flexible working arrangements, the Panel suggested that paragraph 3.1 be amended by the inclusion of "an hour before staff are due to start work" rather than the current "report for work by 10.00am".

The Panel recommended to Human Resources Committee, approval of the report, as amended and as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the revised Absence Management Policy, as now amended, be approved.

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor A Jackson and seconded by A Stevenson (UNISON) that Councillor E Buckmaster be appointed as Chairman for the civic year 2016/17. After being put to the meeting Councillor E Buckmaster was appointed Chairman of the Local Joint Panel for the civic year 2016/17.

It was moved and seconded by Councillor A Jackson that Mr A Stevenson (UNISON) be appointed Vice Chairman for the civic year 2016/17

After being put to the meeting, Mr A Stevenson was appointed Vice Chairman of the Local Joint Panel for the civic year 2016/17.

RESOLVED – that Councillor E Buckmaster and Mr A Stevenson be appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively for the civic year 2016/17.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members noted the Terms of Reference for the Local Joint Panel.

RESOLVED – that the Terms of Reference be noted.

4 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Haysey and G McAndrew. It was noted that Councillor G Cutting was substituting for Councillor G McAndrew.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that there were no reports from the Secretary to the Staff Side.

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm

Chairman

Date