

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE VIRTUAL
MEETING - VIRTUAL MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2020, AT 12.00 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillors M Stevenson, E Buckmaster,
L Haysey and J Dumont

Staff Side (UNISON)

Ms Jackie Bruce (Chairman)
Ms S Forde and Ms J Pomfrett

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors J Francis, R Bolton, J Burmicz,
M McMullen and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Scrutiny Officer
Claire Kirby	- Human Resources Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
William Troop	- Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by Councillor Haysey that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020 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.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked everyone attending the virtual meeting. The Chairman reminded Members that following a decision by Council in May 2020, the Membership of all committees had remained the same to address administrative protocols caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. The Panel Members introduced themselves.

The Chairman welcomed William Troop to the meeting as the new Democratic Services Officer.

The Chairman highlighted some of the good work going on in the background over the last few months as both Officers and Members dealt with working in different ways. She thanked both Staff and Members who she said had gone above and beyond to support residents and

employees during this trying situation. The Chairman referred to the innovative work in the background to ensure that the most vulnerable had been offered support and of the changes which had been made to ensure the continuation of vital services and how all within the Council had adapted to the challenges of the new working situation. The Chairman went on to say that the provision of equipment had enabled the customer services team to work from home and so allow the public to continue to have human contact, with staff readily embracing the challenges of the new ways of working and should be thanked for this.

The Chairman expressed her thanks to the IT Service on the support they had given to both Staff and Members under these difficult situations as all had embraced the use of new technology and Zoom meetings in moving forward to what had become the “new normal”. The Chairman expressed her thanks to the Chief Executive, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Leadership Team for recognising the importance of working with UNISON and thanked Members of the East Herts UNISON Branch Executive Team for their support and their input on the Risk Assessments and Policy Changes that UNISON had been consulted on and the invaluable help this had provided to the Branch Secretary.

The Chairman commented that although there were no current plans for all to return to the office, as things moved forward and the lockdown eased, she explained that UNISON would continue to work collaboratively with the Council on the creation of the new working protocols and dynamic Risk Assessments for staff and services.

The Chairman referred to the statements of support regarding the “Black Lives Matter” issue by the Leader and leaders of other districts, boroughs and County Councils in Hertfordshire and the Police and Crime Commissioner. She expressed her thanks to the Chief Executive for his statement to staff on this important matter and commented that UNISON had always been a leader in the fight against racism and inequality in all its forms and wherever it may be and this would continue to be fought every day. She concluded by saying that everyone was entitled to be treated equally and with respect and the Council, Members and Staff would continue to work together to support this.

The Leader thanked the Chairman for her comments adding that it was a pleasure to be part of that [Black Lives Matter] Statement. She thanked Officers for working under these extreme circumstances for working flexibly and said that the support given to Members had been phenomenal.

4 GENERAL LEAVE POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer’s Side (and Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development) submitted a report on the proposed updated General Leave Policy. He explained that this had been updated to reflect legislative changes (Jack’s Law) from 6 April 2020 regarding statutory parental bereavement leave and pay and also sought approval of a proposal to enhance the second statutory week of bereavement pay to full pay as requested by UNISON and agreed by Leadership Team. The Head of HR explained that the proposed changes were unlikely to impact on the Council detrimentally and would support the

mental impact on a parent in such a difficult situation.

Ms Forde from the Staff Side referred to paragraph 3.3 and the 26 week qualification period of needing to be in the Council's employment. She felt that as the proposal to pay the second week at full pay was unlikely to impact on the Council detrimentally, then this qualification period should be removed.

In respect of a query from Councillor Haysey, the Head of HR explained that whilst the 26 period was a statutory requirement, removing this qualification period would not impact on other Council policies and the existing East Herts 5 day (1st week) provision did not have a qualifying period.

It was moved by Councillor Haysey and seconded by Councillor Stevenson that the 26 qualifying period be removed from the second week of full pay.

After being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Human Resources Committee be advised that the Local Joint Panel (A) support the approval of the updates to the general leave policy to reflect legislation changes from 6 April 2020 regarding statutory parental bereavement leave and pay; and that

(B) a proposal to enhance the second statutory week of bereavement pay to full pay be supported, subject to the removal of the 26 week qualifying period

5 OUT OF HOURS POLICY

The Secretary to the Employer's Side submitted a report regarding proposed changes made to the Standby and Out of Hours Policy following the decision to cease the Corporate Standby Rota. The Human Resources Officer provided a summary of the report.

The Chairman commented that going forward, when consultation was to be undertaken which affected staff, then that should be undertaken early on as this would have made the process easier. She thanked the Leadership Team for bringing the matter forward. The Head of HR and Organisational Development accepted the point made in relation to involving staff early on. He added that originally this had been led by the Housing and Health team but that Officers could have advised teams affected that the matter was under review. He reminded Members that the four staff affected were aware that the out of hours payment to them was under review.

Ms Pomfrett (UNISON Member) sought assurances that the Council's partners would be advised of the proposed changes and made aware that the caretaking team would be the only team on standby. The Head of HR explained that the appropriate service manager would be responsible for letting partners within their service area know of the proposed changes.

The Head of HR reminded the Panel that the changes to the Policy would require the approval of HR Committee which would next meet on 5 August 2020.

It was moved by Councillor Buckmaster and seconded by

Ms J Bruce that the recommendation be supported.

After being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Human Resources Committee be advised that the Local Joint Panel support the changes made to the Standby and Out of Hours Policy following the decision to cease the Corporate Standby Rota.

6 REPORTS BY SECRETARY TO THE STAFF SIDE

There were no reports by the Secretary to the Staff Side.

The meeting closed at 12:36pm

Chairman
Date