

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD AS AN ONLINE
MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 5 MAY 2021, AT
12.00 PM

PRESENT: **Employer's Side**

Councillors J Dumont, E Buckmaster,
L Haysey and A Ward-Booth

Staff Side (UNISON)

J Bruce, S Forde and P Stevens

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor R Bolton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
William Troop	- Democratic Services Officer

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2021/22

It was moved by Councillor Haysey and seconded by Councillor Dumont, that Councillor Ward-Booth be appointed Chairman and Jackie Bruce be appointed

Vice-Chairman for 2021/22. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – Councillor Ward-Booth be appointed Chairman and Jackie Bruce be appointed Vice-Chairman for 2021/22.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Nicola Munro. It was noted that Paul Stevens was acting as a substitute for Nicola Munro, but would be a permanent Panel Member going forward. It was noted that Julie Pomfrett had resigned from her role as Panel Member.

3 MINUTES - 20 JANUARY 2021

It was moved by Councillor Dumont and seconded by Councillor Ward-Booth, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Buckmaster declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he had a family member who was an apprentice at the Council.

6 REPORTS BY SECRETARY TO THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD) briefly introduced the report and explained that four policies had been redeveloped, the Appeals Policy had been reduced, and the addition of minor clauses to three other policies was proposed.

In relation to the Capability Policy, the Head of HR and OD explained that the name of this policy had changed, in line with best practice. The policy had been made more concise and adaptable, as well as the use of 'stages' being introduced in place of 'warnings'. The framework of stages had been made clearer and generally improved. UNISON welcomed the changes.

The Vice-Chairman said that the addition of a flowchart to the policy had been discussed with the Head of HR and OD, as recommended by UNISON and East Herts Together, to provide a visual aid. The Head of HR and OD confirmed that this would be added.

Councillor Dumont asked whether a probationary period would be applicable if a staff member voluntarily redeployed to a new role.

The Head of HR and OD said that the staff member would remain on the same stage, but their targets

would be related to their new role. Voluntary redeployment would be considered subject to business need, and provided a useful alternative to dismissal.

Councillor Buckmaster asked why the use of 'Director' had been removed from the policy in favour of 'member of Leadership Team'. He also asked, in view of the removal of three year reviews, whether new legislation would automatically be added to policies, or whether the Panel would need to review the changes on each occasion.

The Head of HR and OD said that the removal of references to Directors was to bring the policy in line with updated corporate language, as Heads of Service had replaced Directors. He also said that minor changes may be agreed between HR and UNISON, but significant changes would be considered by the Panel.

Councillor Haysey thanked Officers for their work on the policy and welcomed the addition of a flowchart.

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded by the Vice-Chairman that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the revised Capability Policy be approved.

In relation to the Flexible Working Request Scheme, the Head of HR and OD said that this had been strengthened and an appeals procedure added. All flexible working requests would be given fair

consideration.

It was moved by Councillor Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor Haysey that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (B) the revised Flexible Working Request Scheme be approved.

In relation to the Recruitment and Induction Policy, the Head of HR and OD said that there had been a significant redevelopment. The policy now incorporated safer recruitment, was strengthened on equality, and allowed sensible flexibility within recruitment, such as the use of internal recruitment where beneficial. Temporary roles of fewer than six months could be recruited for from a pool of casual workers. If the role then became permanent, with the temporary employee performing satisfactorily and having been in the role for over three months, they would be guaranteed a ring-fenced interview.

Members were also advised that the policy had been updated to reflect the matrix supply chain framework and encourage the use of diverse recruitment panels where possible, or a 'meet the team' approach where this could not be achieved. There was also ongoing work on the production of case studies regarding diversity. Secondment guidance had also changed and secondments were now less likely to be approved given the challenges posed by the low rate of staff returning to the Council following their secondment.

Councillor Dumont asked whether checks were carried

out on agency staff. The Head of HR and OD said that, when required, Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks could be verified. There were also automatic controls which prevented agencies putting forward candidates without the required documentation.

Councillor Haysey asked about the induction of staff during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

The Head of HR and OD and the Vice-Chairman said that corporate inductions had continued virtually and had been successful, with new starters feeling supported and acknowledged. They thanked Helen Farrell, HR Officer, for her work on the inductions.

It was moved by the Councillor Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor Haysey that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (C) the revised Recruitment and Induction Policy be approved.

In relation to the Organisational Development Policy, the Head of HR and OD said a new funding programme for professional development had been introduced which allowed more flexibility on the level of funding provided by the Council. This would be a better system and was linked to Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs). HR would now manage training requests centrally, which would allow a fairer distribution of funds between services. UNISON had asked the Council to consider funding all professional memberships, but the Council did not have the

available budget for this.

Councillor Buckmaster said that the policy used the word 'consider' extensively and asked how responses to training requests would be kept consistent.

The Head of HR and OD said professional training requests would be considered by members of Leadership Team (LT), with support from HR, so consistency would be achieved in this way.

It was moved by the Councillor Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor Buckmaster that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (D) the revised Organisational Development Policy be approved.

It was moved by the Councillor Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor Haysey that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (E) the revised and reduced Appeals Policy be approved in line with the changes made to the policies (A) and (B) above.

It was moved by the Councillor Ward-Booth and seconded by Councillor Dumont that the recommendation, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (F) additional clauses regarding management of Leadership Team members and ensuring the Chief Executive is available for appeals relating to the three policies, be approved.

Councillor Haysey said that as this was to be the last meeting held virtually, she wanted to give her personal thanks to the Vice-Chairman and the Head of HR and OD, and their respective colleagues, for their hard work and flexibility throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period.

7 REPORTS BY SECRETARY TO THE STAFF SIDE

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

8 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.34 pm

Chairman
Date