

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM 1, TOWN LODGE, GERON ROAD,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY ON WEDNESDAY, 28TH JUNE, 2017 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Fiona Hill (Chairman), Ian Albert (substitute), Sarah Dingley and Lynda Needham.*

In Attendance: *Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager), Jo Keshishian (Human Resources Business Manager), Christina Corr (Staff Consultation Forum), Dee Levett (Unison), Claire Morgan, (Staff Consultation Forum), Amelia McInally (Committee and Member Services Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

Also Present:

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bernard Lovewell and Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb.

Having given due notice, Ian Albert advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb.

2 MINUTES - 5 APRIL 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 5 April 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1)The Chairman welcomed all Members and officers to the Meeting;

(2)The Chairman reminded all present that, in line with Council policy, the meeting was being audio recorded;

(3)Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and were required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest which required they leave the room under Paragraph 7.4 of the Code of Conduct, could speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote; and

(4)The Chairman paid tribute to her predecessor former Councillor Allison Ashley and thanked her for all of the hard work she had undertaken as Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

5 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

The Corporate Human Resources Manager drew attention to the Minutes of the meetings of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 5 April 2017 and 3 May 2017 and the Draft Minutes of 7 June 2017 as follows:

Minutes – 5 April 2017

The Corporate Human Resources Manager highlighted:-

There had been regular building and property related queries to the Staff Consultation Forum particularly since being in temporary accommodation. She advised that Property Services were regularly in attendance at SCF meetings to update and answer queries.

The NHDC update had been given by the Human Resources Manager, and reported that staff had received their increase in April salaries for the second year of the two year pay deal, she stated that this had been a 1 percent increase for most staff.

A review of National Local Government pay scales was currently being undertaken.

There was still a lot of discussion to be had with regard office relocation, but regular updates were given by the Head of Revenues, Benefits & IT. She further explained that procedures regarding relocation back to the District Council Offices were being put in place.

Minutes – 3 May 2017

The Corporate Human Resources Manager advised that there had been a small restructure in the Property Services Team which had been through the Corporate Board for approval. The Chief Executive had given an NHDC update on matters that had been covered at Council regarding a number of projects and the financial position of the Council.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager, in answer to a question by a Member, advised the Committee that there was no timescale with regard to the expected restructure.

The Committee was informed also, that the Investors in People assessor had been in attendance at the Council Offices for which the outcome would be disclosed in due course.

Draft Minutes – 7 June 2017

The Corporate Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that Information Technology (IT) had been invited to present to the Staff Consultation Forum at their June meeting at which they had given a comprehensive update.

She further advised that there had been a number of consultations and restructure discussions at both lower and senior management level, but no date had been given for announcement or implementation.

In answer to a question by a Member, the Corporate Human Resources Manager explained to the Committee, in brief, how the “hot-desking” and working space environment would be set up and allocated on return to the District Council Offices. She informed the meeting that personnel who were full-time office based were most likely to be allocated a permanent desk. She further explained that “Hot Desking” lent itself to the working practices in the organisation, and was already available and being utilised successfully by those staff with varied working situations for example, those who were working out of office and home-working. She explained that they would endeavor to group teams together, but Hot Desk Areas would be spread out and were expected to be widely used.

Councillor Needham responded to an enquiry regarding Fire Safety at the refurbished District Council Offices. She informed the Committee that the Fire Brigade had been asked to give further reassurance regarding cladding on the building, they had confirmed that the proposed

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cladding was still appropriate and, given the unusual situation of being able to station a Fire Engine on all four sides of the building, should the need arise, gave additional reassurance.

The Corporate Human Resource Manager advised that the Communications and Grounds Maintenance Department were undergoing restructures.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 5 April 2017, 3 May 2017 and draft minutes for 7 June 2017 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to consider any issues addressed by the Staff Consultation Forum.

6 INFORMATION NOTE: PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the report entitled People Strategy Update and drew attention to the following:

Apprentice Levy

Major changes were coming forward regarding how apprenticeship schemes would run. A new apprenticeship levy account had been opened to pay the levy and purchase training in future.

There were new education/training standards which had been brought into play and were being used more widely. The old apprenticeship framework would, however continue, for those that started on that basis. New standards were being introduced, being written and used to develop existing staff and different types of apprenticeships would be offered in the future.

IR35

Intermediaries Legislation (IR35) came into effect on 6 April 2017. This was a complex piece of work to identify who would be covered by IR35, which had been prepared well and followed through.

Recruitment

An auto short-listing process was now in place and being used, thus improving the speed for recruiting managers. The feedback so far, had been very positive,

Investors In People

Corporate Board had agreed that the organisation continue to be assessed against the Investors in People standard, and reiterated that they would hear the outcome very soon as the assessors had been in on 28 July 2017.

Regular Performance Review

The cycle was coming to an end and 100 percent completion was hoped for. A report, which would be raised in September, would show the number of appraisal returns.

NHDC had technical manager and staff competencies in place which had been refreshed. The previous scoring system was no longer required as there wasn't performance related pay at NHDC, but regular performance reviews were carried out.

Mandatory Gender Pay Gap Recording

Mandatory recording was introduced in March 2017, with the first set of data to be submitted by 31 March 2018.

Discussions were underway related to how this information could be gathered.

Absence

There had been another good year in terms of absence rate, with long term absence significantly reduced.

Organisation Values

This information was published on Intranet but The Corporate Human Resources Manager would circulate these to Members.

Pensions Auto Enrolment

Under statutory requirement, those employees who had opted out of an employer pension scheme had to be re-enrolled every three years. In total 31 individuals were re-enrolled by the deadline, and the majority of these had now opted out again.

7 INFORMATION NOTE: A ROUNDUP OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS AND UPDATE ON THE NJC PAY SCALES NATIONAL REVIEW

The Corporate Human Resources Manager pointed out there was a number of things on which to follow progress:-

NJC Review of National Pay Scales 2016/2018 deal

As part of the 2016-2018 pay deal the NJC agreed to conduct a review of the NJC pay scheme, with the aim of considering pay differentials in light of pay freezes and small increases over a number of years. However, due to the increases in the National Living Wage, pay had been weighted at the bottom of the pay scales.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager referred to the letter included in the report, and commented that there would likely be less pay increases at Senior Management Level, but small pay increases over a long period of time would put back the differentials. There was likely to be between a 4½ - 6 percent increase on the Pay Bill. This was happening alongside pay negotiations.

Exit Payment Cap

The Corporate Human Resources Manager confirmed that the planned Exit Payment Regulations 2016 had no definite date for its implementation.

Salary Sacrifice Car Leasing Scheme

The Corporate Human Resources Manager reported that following the results of the Staff Survey, as few members of staff had taken up this option, it had been decided that The Scheme would be left open, and would be reviewed again on 30 November 2018.

8 DISCUSSION PAPER - TRANSFER OF UNDERTAKINGS PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT (TUPE)

For the benefit of new Members, the Chairman explained that this part of the meeting was, neither a report or a proposal, but a subject chosen to prompt discussion.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager stated that TUPE was an extremely complex piece of employment legislation that was fundamentally put into place to protect employees when their jobs were transferred on to another employer, including where a position was outsourced or a business was sold on. She stated that TUPE came into play to protect the Terms and Conditions, benefits, pensions and pay to ensure that staff who would be affected would move onto something broadly similar. She further clarified that the principle was to ensure that employers gave all relevant information and were open and honest about what employees were transferring to, ensuring a smooth transfer for both employer and employee.

The Human Resources Manager further defined, that TUPE worked to protect the current terms and conditions of employees, unless there was an ETO, (Economic, Technical or Organisational) reason.

The Human Resources Business Manager advised that there had been a small number of employees from Building Control who were TUPEd to the new Building Control Company.

9 SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Corporate Human Resources Manager reminded Members that the discussion topic originally chosen for the June meeting was Shared Parental Leave, although this had been changed to TUPE.

Members considered what subjects should be discussed in September, December and March. The Committee agreed on the following:-

September 2017 – Shared Parental Leave;
December 2017 – Local Government Pension Scheme (The current position and planned changes);
March 2018 – Apprenticeships (The future for apprenticeships, the Apprentice Levy, Public Sector Targets and Higher Apprenticeships).

IT WAS AGREED: That the discussion topics for the meetings would be as follows:-

- (i) 27 September 2017 – Shared Parental Leave;
- (ii) 20 December 2017 – Local Government Pension Scheme;
- (iii) 28 March 2018 – Apprenticeships.

The meeting closed at 3.54 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
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