

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR, ROOM 2/3, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON WEDNESDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2020 AT 10.00 AM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Kay Tart (Chair), Tony Hunter and Martin Stears-Handscomb*

In Attendance: *Ian Couper (Service Director - Resources), Kerry Shorrocks (Corporate Human Resources Manager), Maggie Williams (Senior Human Resources and Contracts Manager) and Matthew Hepburn (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *Ben Glover (Staff Consultation Forum Representative)*

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – 14 Seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kate Aspinwall, Terry Hone and Claire Strong and;

UNISON Representatives:
Debbie Ealand;
Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews;
Dee Levett and;
Christina Corr.

Having given due notice Councillor Tony Hunter advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Claire Strong and Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Kate Aspinwall.

35 MINUTES - 18 DECEMBER 2019

Audio Recording – 34 Seconds

Members present at the Committee meeting advised that owing to their absence at the last meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, they were unable to approve the Minutes of 18 December 2019.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 December 2019 be approved at the next meeting of the Committee.

36 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 59 Seconds

There was no other business notified.

37 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – 1 Minute 10 Seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

38 STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM

Audio Recording – 1 Minute 46 Seconds

The Corporate Humans Resources Manager advised the Committee of the matters discussed at the last three Staff Consultation Forum, as follows:

4 December 2019:

- MSU Restructure;
- 3 members of staff had taken up the Cycle to Work Scheme;
- Pay and pension update; and
- Employee queries.

8 January 2020:

- Payroll project update; and
- IT Update.

February 2020:

- Revenues and Benefits;
- Building Services update;
- Payroll update and key dates to note including 30 March 2020 being the launch date for iTrent.
- Advising staff to download payslips and other documents before the closure of SAP; and
- Windows 10 rollout update.

Members entered into a brief discussion relating to the new payroll system which the Corporate Human Resources Manager and the Senior HR & Contracts Manager provided responses to, including:

- The new payroll system worked on a multiple of devices; and
- Human Resources were able to access payslips from the SAP system if required.

In response to a Member's question regarding homeworking, the Windows 10 update and Citrix, the Service Director – Resources responded as follows:

- The District Council Office's computer equipment would be initially updated with Windows 10, after which this would be rolled out to homeworkers.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum held on 4 December 2019, 8 January 2020 and the draft Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forum meeting held in February 2020 be noted.

39 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE INFORMATION NOTE

Audio Recording – 13 Minutes 58 Seconds

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the information note entitled People Strategy Update and advised the Committee of the following:

- Work was underway to create a new People Strategy;
- The LGE were developing a new Workforce Development Framework;
- The Council now had 12 Apprentices in post, of these 10 were Entry Level and 2 were Higher Level Apprentices;
- The 2 Human Resources Apprentices were undertaking the CIPD qualification;
- Managers were bidding for another 2 Apprentices;
- The Payroll Project was time and labour intensive for the Human Resources department;
- The Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021 went to Full Council in February 2020 was published on the Council's website;
- The unions put in a pay claim for 10% or £10 per hour, whichever was greater;
- The LG Employers wrote to employers on 5 February to say 2% had been offered but was rejected;
- Preparation was underway for auto re-enrolment into the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- GP consultation services had been introduced for all NHDC employees;
- New contracts for the Wider Wallet discount scheme and Kiddivouchers will commence from 1 April 2020; and
- From April, Regular Performance Reviews (RPRs) would become the main mechanism for regular one to one discussions.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager directed Members to Appendix A on page 28 within the report relating to absence and advised from January 2019 to December 2019 rolling year 4 days were lost to short-term absence.

Following the Corporate Human Resources Manager's report on absence, there was a discussion regarding the Coronavirus outbreak. In response to Member's questions on this matter, the Corporate Human Resources Manager responded as follows:

- The short-term absence procedure would be changed;
- Cleaning equipment was available for staff to use;
- Staff were able to bring their personal laptops into work if they wished; and
- Homeworking was being encouraged.

The Corporate Human Resources Manager directed Members to Appendix B – 2019/2020 HR Service Work Plan detailed on page 29 within the report and informed the Committee that the next HR Work Plan would be available at the Joint Staff Consultative Committee in June.

IT WAS AGREED: That the information note entitled People Strategy Update be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Committee to consider the People Strategy Update.

40 INFORMATION NOTE - EQUALITIES UPDATE

Audio Recording – 30 Minutes 40 Seconds

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager presented the information note entitled Equalities Update, as follows:

- In 2019, there was an increase in female staff;
- There was a small number of employees declaring a disability;
- Human Resources would like to define what constitutes as a disability in order to encourage staff to declare their disability;
- The new payroll system would enable staff to make a disability declaration;
- There had been a 2% increase in staff from other ethnic origin;
- 45 – 54 years old made up the largest group of employees;
- There was an increase in those aged 55 years old who had left the Council;
- The biggest reason for those choosing to terminate employment with the Council was resignation;
- Tools for ensuring the use of gender-neutral language in recruitment advertisements, job descriptions, person specifications and interview questions were now being implemented;
- Gapsquare software to identify where there were pay disparities was being used; and
- Eliminating unconscious bias training was being rolled out.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager advised that the percentages within the table at paragraph 3.2.2 - Distances from Home Locations to DCO - on page 45 of the report were incorrect. She provided Members with the accurate figures.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn; and
- Councillor Kay Tart.

The Senior Human Resources & Contracts Manager responded to questions raised accordingly.

IT WAS AGREED: That the information note entitled Equalities Update be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Committee to consider the Equalities Update.

41 STRATEGIC DISCUSSION PAPER - SUCCESSION PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Audio Recording – 53 Minutes 25 Seconds

The Corporate Human Resources Manager presented the Strategic Discussion Paper entitled Succession Planning and Career Development, as follows:

- Regular Performance Reviews were an integral way for employees and managers to discuss career and personal development;
- There was a core list of essential learning on the Learning Management System;
- There were a range of development opportunities;
- Coaching and Mentoring were an additional tool to support personal and career development;

- The Career Development Survey 2019 revealed that some staff members were happy in their current role and did not wish to progress up the career ladder;
- The Career Development Survey 2019 illustrated that the percentage of people satisfied staying in their current job increased with age; and
- Staff working full time felt that sponsoring work-related qualifications was the most important measure to develop their career.

The following Members took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Martin Stears-Handscomb;
- Councillor Kay Tart; and
- Councillor Tony Hunter.

In response to points raised by Members, the Corporate Human Resources Manager provided the following responses:

- The Career Development Survey was sent to all staff and it would be re-run in the future;
- Training was taking place to ensure managers understand how to conduct RPR discussions;
- Staff were encouraged to discuss with their manager the areas that they would like to develop;
- In order to improve job satisfaction:
 - The Flexi-time policy had been modernised;
 - The early Christmas closure has been made permanent;
 - There were more social clubs taking place i.e. 'Pay Day Drinks'; and
 - The Staff Recognition Scheme had been introduced.
- There were a number of workshops and training opportunities available on the learning management system.

IT WAS AGREED: That the discussion paper on Succession Planning and Career Development be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Committee to consider the discussion paper on Succession Planning and Career Development.

42 FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

Audio Recording – 1 Hour 15 Minutes 47 Seconds

IT WAS AGREED: That possible discussion topics for the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be circulated to Members.

The next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee would be held on Wednesday 17 June 2020.

The meeting closed at 11.18 am

Chair