

# Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 30 May 2018, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.00pm.

## **Present:**

Employer's representatives: Councillors Coker, Heath and Parkins.

Trades Unions' representatives: Mr Crump and Mr Lynch.

**Also Present:** Mr Carden (Building Manager & H&S Co-ordinator), Mrs Dolphin (HR Manager), Mr Leach (Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mrs Rolfe (Head of Service, Health & Community Protection).

## 1. **Appointment of Chairmen**

**Resolved** that Mr Crump be appointed as the Chairman for the Trades Unions' representatives.

**Resolved** that Councillor Coker be appointed as the Chairman for the Employer's side.

It was the Employer's turn to Chair the meeting so Councillor Coker took the Chair.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Parkins highlighted to the forum that she was a member of Unison and a branch Executive member at her place of work.

## 3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2018 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 4. **Corporate Health and Safety - Update**

The Panel considered a report submitted after publication of the agenda from Health & Community Protection which summarised the Council's current position in relation to corporate health and safety. A copy of the Lone Worker Policy and Guidance was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Building Manager and Health and Safety Co-ordinator gave a brief synopsis of the report detailing the work being handled within the Council to ensure corporate health and safety. Included within the report was the Lone Worker Policy and Guidance and the Panel members discussed the issues arising from it. In particular, they were interested in the pilot scheme that had been introduced to test the usefulness of body cameras for lone workers. The Council was looking at what would be involved to roll this scheme out fully because it had been noted that body cameras acted

as a deterrent in the face of confrontation and the cameras were useful to gather evidence.

**Resolved** that

- (1) the updated position to health and safety is noted; and
- (2) the recommendations in the Lone Working Policy are approved and adopted.

4. **Disciplinary Procedure for Statutory Officers**

The Panel considered a report from the Democratic Services Manager which brought forward proposals for amendments to the Constitution in respect of

- (i) the disciplinary procedures for statutory officers at Warwick District Council following revisions to the procedures by legislative changes; and
- (ii) consideration of the need to appoint a sub-committee for specific matters.

The report followed the discussions at Employment Committee on 13 September 2017 when it considered the appointment of a sub-committee, as set out within its Constitutional remit "that contains at least one member of each of the registered political groups to deal with employment related matters that fall within the jurisdiction of elected members".

During consideration of the item, Members of the Employment Committee were concerned because of the registered political groups, the Whitnash Residents' Association (WRA) only had one Member on the Committee and the Liberal Democrat Group had no members on the Committee. This would mean that in the event that a WRA Member could not attend a sub-committee meeting, there was no alternative Member of that political group to act as a substitute. Therefore, the Committee deferred a decision until the next meeting, pending a written report to provide clarification on the duties the sub-committee would perform and on the situation regarding membership.

The report before the Panel set out the recommended approach for a sub-committee of the Employment Committee to deal with the recruitment, disciplinary and potential dismissal of any Chief Officers. Subsequently, the report would go before the Employment Committee for agreement.

The Democratic Services Manager informed the Panel that, to date, he had not had any comments back from any Heads of Service in respect of the report.

**Resolved** that

- (1) the amendments to the Constitution as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, that will be a recommendation to Council from 20 June 2018 Employment Committee, is supported; and
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- (2) the Panel supports that the Employment Committee adopts the disciplinary procedure for statutory officers as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

### 3. **People Strategy Update**

The Panel received a verbal update from the Human Resources Manager that provided information on the work being undertaken by the People Strategy Steering Group.

The Human Resources Manager explained that a review had been undertaken of the grievance and disciplinary process for staff, which with its two-stage appeals process, was felt to be far too long. Research had been undertaken to review what other organisations did, and what process was recommended by ACAS. Having undertaken this review, it was felt that the process should only involve one appeal which would remove the involvement of the member of staff's line manager and Members of the Employment Committee. Of the 18 organisations that had been investigated to see how they handled the disciplinary and grievance process, only five went to a second stage appeal.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Coker that the procedure formally stated that it was possible to raise objection to the person hearing the appeal, the Human Resources Manager confirmed that the guidelines stated that the appeal might be heard by either the Line Manager or the manager above them. Objections could be made if it was felt the person might not be impartial and the Council could bring in external people to hear an appeal if this was necessary.

The Council would be introducing a staff health and wellbeing scheme in conjunction with BUPA from 1 June 2018 which gave staff set cash back amounts for certain medical expenses. A report would be brought to the next Panel meeting on progress.

The long-term sickness policy had also been reviewed in respect of the member of staff's right to carry across annual leave not taken whilst they were sick into the new holiday year. Currently the full allowance of up to 31 days leave could be carried across and this had caused a lot of issues for the staff in that department not only having to cover the work lost whilst the staff member was on sick leave, but also having to cover what could amount to over two months' of annual leave (the allowance not taken in the previous holiday year, plus the allowance in the current holiday year). This had a huge impact on teams and the organisation. In future, staff on sick leave would only be entitled to take across into the new holiday year, the statutory holiday days (a maximum of 20 days).

Other work ongoing or which had taken place was the IIP staff survey, Social Media and Discrimination, the Chief Executive's Annual Talk to staff, and the work on the Council's Facebook Page.

(The meeting ended at 5.10 pm)