

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Chamber Suite 1, The Arc, Clowne, on Wednesday 11th December 2013 at 1100 hours.

PRESENT:-

Council Representatives:-

Councillors Mrs P.M Bowmer, V.P. Mills, K. Reid and A.F Tomlinson.

Unison Representatives:-

J. Clayton, J. Wilmot, C. McKinney and K. Shillitto.

Unite Representatives:-

None attended.

Officers:-

T. Morrell (Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC), C. Ashton (HR Manager, NEDDC) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

0664. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors A.M. Syrett and E. Watts, S. Sambrooks (Unite) and A. Freeman (Unison Regional Office).

0665. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR MEETING

Moved by J. Wilmot, seconded by K. Shillitto

RESOLVED that J. Clayton be elected as Chair for the meeting.

J. Clayton in the Chair

0666. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor K. Reid

RESOLVED that Councillor E. Watts be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee for the ensuing year.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

0667. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Unison raised an urgent item of business for Committee to consider in relation to the Driving at Work Policy.

Unison agreed that the changes needed to be included in the policy but raised concern that these had not been presented through the correct channels for consultation.

A discussion took place.

The Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, advised that she would look into this.

Moved by J. Wilmot, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that the Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, look into why changes to the Driving Policy had not been presented correctly for consultation.

(Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC)

0668. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

0669. MINUTES – 14th MARCH 2013

Moved by K. Shillitto, seconded by J. Wilmot

RESOLVED that the minutes of a Union/Employee Consultation Committee meeting held on 14th March 2013 be approved as a correct record.

0670. SICKNESS ABSENCE / OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2013

Members considered a report of the Assistant Director of Human Resources in relation to sickness absence/occupational health statistics for the period July 2013 to September 2013.

The target for sickness absence for July to September 2013 was 2 days per full time employee (FTE) and the outturn was 2.5 days per FTE. For comparison, the outturn figure for the same period in 2012 was 2.51 days per FTE.

A breakdown of the figures by department and by long term/short term sickness absence was attached to the report for Members' information.

The number of days lost due to long term sickness had reduced in 2013 by 134.5 days and the number of days lost due to short term sickness had reduced in 2013 by

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

41 days. It was noted that the average number of FTE employees had also reduced in 2013 by 67.87

The Occupation Health referral figure for July to September 2013 was 11 in comparison to 19 in the same period in 2012.

A breakdown of reasons for all long term sickness absence was detailed in the report, though an error in the table of figures was noted and Members were advised that reasons for absence under 'back/neck' had been included twice with two separate figures. The HR Manager, NEDDC, would check the figures and report back to Members.

It was noted that only 1 employee had declared stress as a reason for sickness absence.

A discussion took place regarding work related stress.

A Unison representative suggested that use of the Arc's gym facilities for staff could be looked at and also how the sickness absence policy was being adhered to. He also suggested that the policy be reviewed.

The Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, replied that work related stress did not seem to be a particular issue at Bolsover but if the Unions felt that it was an issue, training for Managers and employees could be looked at. The sickness absence policy would also be one of the next policies to be reviewed. Councillor Tomlinson added that use of the gym facilities for staff was being looked at.

A query was raised in relation to the latest sickness absence figures for all Derbyshire authorities and the HR Manager, NEDDC, replied that this was about 8* days but would check the figure.

Moved by K. Shillitto, seconded by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that subject to clarification of the breakdown figures of reasons for all long term sickness absence, the report be received.

(Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC)

**Further to the UECC meeting on 11th of December 2013, in relation to sickness absence, we do not have data from all Derbyshire Authorities but of the 5 responses received for the year 2012/13, the average was 8.51 days per employee.*

0671. EQUALITIES MONITORING JANUARY TO MARCH 2013

Members considered a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring data for the period January to March 2013 on the Council's performance on equality issues in relation to its employment practices.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by K. Shillitto

RESOLVED that the report be received.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

0672. EQUALITIES MONITORING APRIL TO JUNE 2013

Members considered a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring data for the period April to June 2013 on the Council's performance on equality issues in relation to its employment practices.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by K. Shillitto
RESOLVED that the report be received.

0673. EQUALITIES MONITORING JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2013

Members considered a report in respect of Equalities Monitoring data for the period July to September 2013 on the Council's performance on equality issues in relation to its employment practices.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by K. Shillitto
RESOLVED that the report be received.

0674. EXIT INFORMATION 1ST APRIL 2012 TO 31ST MARCH 2013

Members considered a report in respect of Exit information and a summary of primary reasons for permanent employees leaving the Authority for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013. The report also included comparisons for the same period in 2012.

A breakdown by department was included in the report along with a copy of the standard exit questionnaire for Members information.

Moved by Councillor K. Reid, seconded by K. Shillitto
RESOLVED that the report be received.

0675. DRAFT TIME OFF AND FACILITIES AGREEMENT FOR BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members considered a report of the Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, in respect of the draft Time Off and Facilities Agreement for Bolsover.

An amended version of the draft Agreement was circulated to the meeting and the Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, explained that a reference was now included at the end of Point 9 in relation to the form at Appendix 1, which should be used to request time off. Also, point 14.3 now reflected the 21 days' notice requirement where it was previously referred to as notice of 'at least a few weeks'.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

A short discussion took place and it was agreed that wording in the second sentence of the paragraph in the form (Appendix 1), be amended from; 'In the case of a union training course 21 days prior notice 'must' be given, ... to; 'In the case of a union training course 21 days prior notice 'preferably' be given.

Moved by Councillor K. Reid, seconded by J. Wilmot

RESOLVED that wording in the second sentence of the paragraph in the form (Appendix 1), be amended from; 'In the case of a union training course 21 days prior notice 'must' be given, ... to; 'In the case of a union training course 21 days prior notice 'preferably' be given.

A Unison representative raised concern with regard to point 18.3 and 18.4 of the Agreement under 'Disputes' in relation to a "matter being referred to UECC if an agreement could not be reached" and that this meant there was potentially a three month wait as UECC meetings were held quarterly.

A short discussion took place and it was agreed that if this circumstance arose then an extraordinary meeting of UECC could be arranged.

Moved by K. Shillitto, seconded by Councillor K. Reid

RECOMMENDED that subject to 'must' being changed to 'preferably' as per the recommendation above, the amended draft Time Off and Facilities Agreement for Bolsover be presented to Council for agreement and adoption.

(Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC/Governance Manager)

0676. SMOKE FREE POLICY

Members considered a report of the HR Manager, NEDDC, in respect of the Smoke Free Policy for Bolsover.

An amended version of the Smoke Free Policy was circulated to the meeting and the HR Manager, NEDDC, explained that under 'Policy Statement' at part 3, the last bullet point had been changed to read 'Smoking and the use of electronic cigarettes will not be permitted in Council buildings' rather than 'on Council grounds'. There was also another change to the reference at part 3 that the original policy was introduced in March 2008 and not October 2007.

Under part 5, 'Non Compliance', the HR Manager, NEDDC, explained that the Assistant Director of Public Health had advised that someone could not be requested to not smoke e-cigarettes in a private dwelling.

Further to a question raised by a Unison representative, it was clarified that not smoking 5 metres in front of any Council workplace meant any of the Council's buildings.

Unison raised that the Smoke Free Policy needed to be clear that it was about the image of the Council as well as peoples' health.

UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

The HR Manager, NEDDC, advised that guidance had been sought and though e-cigarettes may not be as harmful, it was the image and reputation of people walking round the Council building smoking e-cigarettes.

A short discussion took place.

Members were further advised that the Smoke Free Policy had been adopted at NEDDC, and as this was a separate version for Bolsover, the NEDDC logo had been removed.

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor K. Reid
RECOMMENDED that the Smoke Free Policy be presented to Council for agreement and adoption.

(HR Manager, NEDDC/Governance Manager)

0677. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Members considered a report of the Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC, in respect of Policy and Procedures for Organisational Review.

North East Derbyshire District Council has had a policy for use in organisational reviews for some years which had recently been redrafted and updated. As Bolsover had no similar policy, and with the view of harmonising policies across both Councils wherever possible, it was proposed to forward the same draft policy to Council for adoption.

A discussion took place.

It was noted that although the content of the Policy was common to both BDC and NEDDC, reference to NEDDC would be taken out as this was a BDC Policy.

Unison noted that they would look forward to being involved as early as possible with the Chief Executive Officer when he is looking at organisational review.

Moved by K. Shillitto, seconded by Councillor V. Mills
RECOMMENDED that subject the reference to NEDDC being taken out of the Policy, the policy and Procedures for Organisational Review be presented to Council for agreement and adoption.

(Senior HR Advisor, NEDDC/Governance Manager)

The meeting concluded at 1215 hours.