

## **UNION/EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 1100 hours.

### **PRESENT:-**

Council Representatives:-

Councillor K. Reid in the Chair

Councillors Mrs P.M. Bowmer, M.J. Dooley, A. Joesbury and A.M. Syrett.

Unison Representatives:- C. McKinney, K. Shillitto and L. Cheong.

Unite Representatives:- No representatives present.

Officers:- L. Hickin (Strategic Director – People), S. Gordon (Human Resources and OD Manager) and A. Bluff (Governance Officer).

### **0298. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor D. McGregor and the Chief Executive Officer.

### **0299. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

It was noted that the appointment of a Vice Chair for the ensuing year had been resolved at the last meeting.

### **0300. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

### **0301. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

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### 0302. MINUTES – 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2018

Moved by Councillor A. Joesbury and seconded by K. Shillitto

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of a Union/Employee Consultation Committee be approved as a correct record.

### 0303. CODE OF CONDUCT

Committee considered a report regarding the Employee Code of Conduct document which had been refreshed.

The Council's Constitution had been reviewed in 2017 with minor amendments being made to the Employee Code of Conduct.

Although the revised Constitution was approved at Council in May 2018, it was subsequently identified that the refreshed Employee Code of Conduct had not been considered by this Committee as part of the consultation process when changes were proposed to ensure it was reflective of business needs.

Only minor changes had been made to the document, for example, job titles as a result of restructures.

The report sought Committee's recommendation that the refreshed Employee Code of Conduct document be presented to Standards Committee for approval and recommendation to Council for adoption.

Unison raised no concerns regarding the document, however, commented that it would be helpful if future changes to any documents appeared as tracked changes.

Moved by Councillor A.M. Syrett and seconded by Councillor A. Joesbury.

**RECOMMENDED** that Standards Committee approve the refreshed Employee Code of Conduct document and recommend to Council for adoption.

(Governance Manager)

### 0304. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS; QUARTER 1 – APRIL 2018 TO JUNE 2018

Committee considered a report in relation to sickness absence/occupational health statistics for Quarter 1 of 2018/19 (April 2018 to June 2018).

The average number of days lost per employee for sickness absence in Quarter 1 was 2.23 days. This was against an annual target set of 8.5 days per employee. The outturn figure for Quarter 1 in 2017/18 was 2 days.

A breakdown of days lost in Quarter 1 for short term and long term sickness absence for each service area was attached to the report for Committee's information.

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The top three reasons for sickness absence in the Quarter was as follows;

Directors/Heads of Service - Operations/Hospital Stomach/Kidney/Liver.  
People Directorate - Stomach, Kidney, Liver, Musc/Skeletal, Other.  
Place Directorate - Stress/Depression, Musc/Skeletal, Other.

A Member queried if those staff who took no sickness absence during the course of a year were recognised in anyway, for example, by way of praise. The HR and OD Manager replied that this was a difficult area to balance as the Authority employed some staff who had disabilities and who would most likely need to take some sickness absence during the course of a year.

A Member commented that it may help the Committee if more detail was provided with regard to reasons for staff being absent with stress and depression.

A Unison representative commented that it was important that those staff who covered the work of absent staff were also recognised.

The HR and OD Manager noted that the Council's Employee Celebration Awards would be held in December and this was an opportunity for Managers and/or Members to put staff or teams forward to be recognised for these types of achievements as well as other achievements.

Moved by Councillor K. Reid and seconded by K. Shillitto  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### **0305. TRADE UNION (FACILITY TIME PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS) REGULATIONS 2017**

The HR and OD Manager provided a verbal update to Committee on new regulations regarding Trade Union Facility Time publication requirements.

New regulations had come into place regarding time spent by officers on trade union activities and duties were significantly more detail would need to be provided and published than previous requirements.

A Unison representative acknowledged the report and that Unison were happy to provide information subject to no breach of any rules around confidentiality.

At the request of the Chair, C. McKinney (Unison), provided an update to the meeting on the situation regarding the ongoing historic equal pay claims. C. McKinney also expressed his thanks, on behalf of Unison, to the Leader, Councillor Syrett, the former Deputy Leader, Councillor Dooley and also the Chief Executive Officer, for their engaged approach to negotiations in order to progress the cases to a resolution. The Chair requested that Unison's acknowledgement to Members and the Chief Executive Officer regarding the progress made be noted in the Minutes.

Moved by Councillor K. Reid and seconded by K. Shillitto  
**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

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### 0306. CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN

Committee considered a report submitted by Unison in relation to the Christmas closedown in December 2018.

The report informed Committee of a request by Unison for the Authority to consider a full day closure of the Council offices at the Arc on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

At present Unison understood that the intention was for the Council buildings to be open on the morning of Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2018, closing at lunchtime. This was in line with convention whereby the offices opened for half a day on Christmas Eve.

Based on feedback from some UNISON members, Unison believed that most staff would welcome the closure of the Council for the full day on the 24<sup>th</sup> December, i.e., closing on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018 and reopening on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019. This would be a more efficient use of Council resources instead of opening for little more than three hours on a day when the likely demands on services would be minimal and the usual emergency cover which applied for the duration of the Christmas shutdown could be equally effective for the short period of the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> December.

Unison sought to negotiate the matter with the Authority in accordance with the functions of UECC and if agreement could be reached the amount of time between now and Christmas would enable staff to build up the necessary amount of flexi/TOIL to enable them, if they did not have the option, to use annual leave.

The Strategic Director – People stated that Heads of Service should take a pragmatic approach to the needs of their service for the three hours on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> December in relation to staff cover. In terms of close down for the three hours, there were staff who wished to work on the morning of Christmas Eve and closing the building could have a negative impact on those members of staff. If a whole department wished to take leave, a view would need to be taken as that service would not be provided to the public on Christmas Eve.

A Member raised that this was a situation which wouldn't happen often in the calendar and she hoped that a flexible approach would be taken by Managers.

A Unison representative noted that some services would have no demand on them on Christmas Eve and others would have some demand which created a level of unfairness on certain departments and they wouldn't have a level of flexibility.

The Chair noted that Unison would go back to the model agreed with management and this would be sent out to Unison members and also staff not in a trade union. The Chair requested that he be kept informed of progress.

Moved by Councillor K. Reid and seconded by C. McKinney (Unison)

**RESOLVED** that (1) Unison go back to the model agreed with management and this be sent out to Unison members and members not in a trade union.

(2) the Chair be kept informed of progress.

The meeting concluded at 1130 hours.