

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 January 2022 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Mary Dooley in the Chair

Councillors Stan Fox, Andrew Joesbury, Tom Kirkham and Graham Parkin.

Chris McKinney (UNISON) (Vice-Chair) and Jess Clayton (UNISON).

Officers:- Grant Galloway (Executive Director of Strategy and Development), Sara Gordon (Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager) and Tom Scott (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance was Councillor Duncan McGregor (Portfolio Holder - Corporate Governance) and Councillor Maxine Dixon.

UECC7-21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Before the meeting began, the Chair held a minute of silence for former Councillor Ken Walker and his late wife Freda Walker following the incident at their home last weekend.

An apology for absence was received from Karen Hanson (Executive Director of Resources).

UECC8-21/22 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

UECC9-21/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

UECC10-21/22 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Andrew Joesbury and seconded by Councillor Graham Parkin

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee meeting on 30th September 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

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UECC11-21/22 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT

The HR and Organisational Development Manager presented the Sickness Absence Quarter 3 (October – December 2021) report. She explained how COVID-19 had been a significant factor in increases during this quarter, and the key reasons why were a return to normal social mixing, schools returning and employees returning to the office.

Members enquired about absences by each department. The HR and Organisational Development Manager explained that averages by department were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Graham Parkin asked if the number of people working from home had a bearing on the number of absences. The HR and Organisational Development Manager confirmed this to be the case, and added that frontline services would experience more COVID-19 infections because of their inability to work from home.

Councillor Tom Kirkham asked which policies were in place to cover teams who had officers with long-term sickness absence. The HR and Organisational Development Manager explained that there was a Sickness Absence Policy in place, and managers were asked for ways they can be supported.

Councillor Mary Dooley asked what the timeline was for supporting people with a long-term absence. The HR and Organisational Development Manager explained that their manager would speak with them within four weeks, and then within eight weeks HR would take the next step, such as a phased return or a convalescence period.

Councillor Andrew Joesbury acknowledged the amount of stress staff were under at the moment. The Executive Director of Strategy and Development explained that the HR and Organisational Development Manager had produced an e-mail telling staff where they can find support on stress. Councillor Mary Dooley requested that this e-mail be sent out to all staff and all Members.

Councillor Maxine Dixon asked what the process was for an employee to report a COVID-19 infection. The HR and Organisational Development Manager explained that staff were told to talk to their managers first, and HR informed managers of isolation periods and the questions they must ask.

Chris McKinney (UNISON) referred to the section of the report which read: "Mental Health awareness sessions are being delivered across the Council as part of the Council's quarterly corporate training programme."

Councillor Andrew Joesbury moved and Councillor Mary Dooley seconded
RESOLVED

- (i) That the Committee would receive feedback on how the mental health awareness sessions progress;
- (ii) That the Committee notes the report.

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The meeting concluded at 10:40 hours.