

West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel

Title:	Agenda						
Date:	Monday 26 January 2015						
Time:	3.00 pm						
Venue:	GFR13 West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds						
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Mark Johnson Vice Chairman Angela Rushen</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>St Edmundsbury Borough Council</u> (3) (Employers' Side)</th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Forest Heath District Council</u> (3) (Employers' Side)</th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Staff Representatives</u> (6) (Employees' Side)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bob Cockle Angela Rushen Clive Springett</td> <td>Stephen Edwards Geoffrey Jaggard Tony Simmons</td> <td>Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Claire McKenna Jane Orton Samantha Rackham Julie Roberts</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>St Edmundsbury Borough Council</u> (3) (Employers' Side)	<u>Forest Heath District Council</u> (3) (Employers' Side)	<u>Staff Representatives</u> (6) (Employees' Side)	Bob Cockle Angela Rushen Clive Springett	Stephen Edwards Geoffrey Jaggard Tony Simmons	Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Claire McKenna Jane Orton Samantha Rackham Julie Roberts
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The membership of this Panel needs not to be politically balanced.							
This meeting will be preceded at 2.30pm by the usual pre-briefings for the Employers' Side (GFR13) and the Employees' Side (Mayor's Parlour)							
Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.						
Quorum:	Three Members; comprising a minimum of one SEBC Councillor, one FHDC Councillor and one Staff Representative						

Committee administrator:	Helen Hardinge Committee Administrator & FHDC Scrutiny Support Tel: 01638 719363 Email: helen.hardinge@westsuffolk.gov.uk
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Agenda

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Procedural Matters

WHILST THESE AGENDA PAPERS ARE NOT COVERED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985, IN RESPECT OF THOSE ITEMS WHICH ARE LISTED AS CONTAINING EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL, MEMBERS OF THE PANEL ARE REQUESTED TO TREAT THEM AS SUCH

Part 1

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Substitutes**
- 3. Minutes** **1 - 4**
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 (copy attached).
- 4. Employee Volunteering Scheme** **5 - 14**
Report No: **JSP/JT/15/001**
- 5. Question from Unison West Suffolk Branch with regard to the Anglia Revenues Partnership Employment Model and Response from the Head of HR, Legal & Democratic Services** **15 - 16**
Document attached.
- 6. Workforce Data**
Verbal update to be provided.
- 7. Any Other Business**

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WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE PANEL

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

3.00PM - 4.03PM

Members Present

Forest Heath District Council
(Employers' Side)

St Edmundsbury Borough
Council (Employers' Side)

Staff Representatives
(Employees' Side)

Councillor S J Edwards
Councillor G Jaggard

Councillor R Cockle
Councillor Mrs A Rushen

M Johnson
C McKenna

Also in attendance

V Abbott, HR Business Partner
J Maguire, HR Business Partner
K Points, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
H Hardinge, Committee Administrator & FHDC Scrutiny Support

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Simmons (Forest Heath District Council – Employers' Side), Councillor C Springett (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side) and from L Cocker, J Orton, S Rackham and J Roberts (Staff Representatives – Employees' Side).

Substitutes

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
032	<u>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2014/2015</u> Mr M Johnson (Employees' Side) be elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2014/2015.	RESOLVED
033	<u>APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2014/2015</u> Councillor Mrs A Rushen be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for 2014/2015.	RESOLVED

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
034	<p><u>SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2014</u></p> <p>The schedule of recommendations from the meeting held on 16 January 2014 were received and noted subject to Councillor Mrs Rushen's initial being amended to read A (as opposed to S).</p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development made reference to Minute No 029 and the reference therein to the requirement to provide VAT receipts for fuel purchases when making mileage claims. The Panel were advised that the Councils were in the process of moving over to an electronic system of submitting mileage claims via the MiHR programme which currently administered employees' annual leave. Under the new system the authorities would no longer request VAT receipts for fuel, however, the HMRC advised that individuals should keep these for their own records. A full communications plan was currently being developed to promote the new way of working.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>
035	<p><u>WEST SUFFOLK WORKFORCE UPDATE – PRESENTATION</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development delivered a presentation to the Panel which set out the Workforce Development Data for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 for the West Suffolk authorities.</p> <p>It contained various information including; age and gender analysis, reasons for leaving and staff turnover. The Panel's attention was drawn to the average employee sickness level which stood at 5.67 days for 2013/2014 which was far lower than the average nationally for Local Government which was currently 7.6 days. The Head of Service explained that she would be communicating this significant achievement to all Members of both authorities.</p> <p>Mark Johnson spoke in support of the absence review meetings that had taken place over the period, he considered these meetings to have been fundamental in identifying support needed by staff and thereby reducing the level of sickness absence.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
036	<p><u>JOINT WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2014-2016 (REPORT NO JSP14/008)</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2014-2016 which set out how the authorities would recruit and develop their workforce.</p>	

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
	<p>The Head of Service explained that it was imperative for the Councils to have the people, skills and behaviours needed to ensure that the priorities in the Corporate Plan were delivered.</p> <p>The Panel was asked to recommend approval of the Strategy to both authorities Cabinets for formal adoption.</p> <p>Members posed a number of questions which the HR Officers present responded to.</p> <p>Mark Johnson drew attention to the introduction on Page 1 of the Strategy, specifically the last bullet point on the page and the sentence: "<i>When we recruit we will recruit the best person for the job; making sure we have the right people, with the right skills and behaviours, able to perform their job well, and in the right way</i>". Mark was concerned at the wording of the sentence and asked if it could be rephrased to reflect that the authorities would continue to do this.</p> <p>The Head of Service agreed to take that point on board and emphasised that the document was still a work in progress and was subject to amendment prior to final adoption.</p> <p>The West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2014 – 2016 be recommended to Cabinets for formal adoption by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	RECOMMENDED
037	<p><u>JOINT ADOPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE AND JOINT FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY (REPORT NO JSP14/009)</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that Officers were currently working through the Human Resources policies that were in place at both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in order to produce and agree new joint policies for West Suffolk.</p> <p>The Panel was asked to recommend approval of the Joint Flexible Working Policy and the Joint Adoption Policy & Procedure to both authorities Cabinets for formal adoption.</p> <p>Members posed a number of questions on the policies which the HR Officers present responded to.</p> <p>The Joint Flexible Working Policy and the Joint Adoption Policy & Procedure be recommended to Cabinets for formal adoption by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	RECOMMENDED

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
038	<p><u>APPROVAL REQUEST FOR WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE PANEL – GOING FORWARD BRIEFING NOTE</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development made reference to the briefing note that had been attached to the agenda with regard to this item.</p> <p>The Panel were being requested to agree that where minor changes to joint policies were required due to legislation changes which were statutory and where the Councils had no choice in how it was applied, that the amendments were made to the policy without referral for approval to the Panel.</p> <p>A record of such changes would be kept, with the date of implementation, and the Panel would be advised at their meetings of any amendments that had taken place. Separate communication would also be issued to staff to ensure they were made aware.</p> <p>The Panel supported and endorsed this way forward.</p>	RESOLVED
039	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p><u>Member Development Charter</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development thanked those Elected Members who had been involved in the assessment for the Member Development Charter. She was pleased to announce that Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had been awarded the Charter and were the first in the country to have achieved this as authorities working jointly.</p> <p>This would be widely communicated to staff and Members.</p>	NOTED
040	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>Two proposed dates for the next meeting in December 2014 had been included on the agenda for the Panel's consideration, however, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development suggested that the next meeting take place in January 2015 instead, as the next quarter ended in December; meaning a January meeting would enable the most up to date information to be provided to the Panel.</p> <p>It was agreed that Democratic Services would source a suitable date in January 2015 for the meeting (to take place at West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds) and the Panel would be advised accordingly.</p>	NOTED

West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

Title of Report:	Employee Volunteering Scheme	
Report No:	JSP/JT/15/001	
Decisions plan reference:	N/A	
Report to and date/s:	West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel	26 January 2015
Portfolio holders:	Councillor Stephen Edwards Cabinet Member for Resources, Governance & Performance (FHDC) Tel: 01638 660518 Email: stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	Councillor David Ray Cabinet Member for Performance & Resources (SEBC) Tel: 01359 250912 Email: david.ray@stedsbc.gov.uk
Lead officer:	Karen Points Head of HR, Legal & Democratic Services Tel: 01284 757015 Email: karen.points@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	This scheme is designed to support employees that already volunteer and to encourage new volunteers to get involved in opportunities to share their skills and experience, develop new skills and contribute to our communities.	
Recommendation:	It is recommended that, the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel note and support the contents of the Employee Volunteering Scheme attached as Appendix A.	

Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:		Leadership Team and Unison	
Alternative option(s):		N/A	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Needs to be managed to ensure there is no detriment to the service delivery	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
Impact to Service Delivery	Low	Effective decision making from Managers and support from HR.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		None directly	
Background papers: (all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)		None – see document attached	
Documents attached:		Appendix A - Employee Volunteering Scheme	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 This joint scheme has been designed to support employees that already volunteer and to encourage new volunteers to get involved in opportunities to share their skills and experience, develop new skills and contribute to our communities.
- 1.2 The scheme would need to be effectively managed with the support of HR to ensure there is no detriment to the service delivery of the authorities.

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APPENDIX A

Forest Heath District Council and
St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Employee Volunteering Scheme

January 2015

Employee Volunteering Scheme

1. Introduction

We are committed to supporting our employees in seeking out opportunities for volunteering in the community. This scheme is designed to support employees that already volunteer and to encourage new volunteers to get involved in opportunities to share their skills and experience, develop new skills and contribute to our communities.

2. Employee Volunteering

The scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees at West Suffolk. This can be as individuals or within operational teams. We will release employees from normal duties and consider reasonable requests to allow staff to continue current volunteering or undertake new volunteering activities.

3. Why volunteer?

For volunteers - it can bring a great sense of personal achievement and self-worth by contributing to the community and forging closer relationships with our communities; give a broader outlook and appreciation of diverse communities; provide an opportunity to pass on the benefit of experience and skills; help to develop new skills and experiences and enhance wellbeing; improve employability by providing valuable experience and demonstrating a 'can do' attitude.

For teams who undertake volunteering opportunities - it can bring a sense of achievement and can enhance working relationships and understanding of strengths and development needs in the team.

For communities - it can help voluntary organisations to deliver services and improve communities; build a more robust and resilient society; improve relationships between council staff and residents and bring in new skills, experience and education.

For the Councils - it can improve morale, commitment and performance; enhance our reputation and profile; encourage individual and team development; strengthen relationships with voluntary, community and faith sectors and help to demonstrate our commitment and support to both our employees and communities.

4. Volunteering

All employees are able to take reasonable time off for personal volunteering, team volunteering and/or personal development and training. This can be taken one day at a time, a number of days together or broken down to fit the needs of the activity as long as it does not have a detrimental effect on your substantive

role and the service. Staff can also 'top-up' volunteering allowances with annual leave, flexible working or unpaid leave if required, with line manager approval.

Volunteers must not be paid by the organisation they are supporting, except for the reimbursement of legitimate expense actually incurred. They will not be able to claim back any hours volunteered outside of normal working hours or any travel and subsistence incurred from West Suffolk Councils.

All participants must meet the following criteria:-

- have completed at least 12 months continuous service with West Suffolk councils
- have a Bradford Factor of below 150 over the previous 12 months
- have achieved a performance review rating of consistent or higher
- have agreed the time to be taken with their line manager at least a month in advance of the volunteering activity.

In addition:

- the volunteering activity must be agreed with your line manager, who should be provided with sufficient information for him/her to understand the commitment, any risks and the type of activity you will be engaged in.
- the volunteering request cannot be approved if it will involve any financial cost to 'back-fill' staff cover, or if it will disrupt or adversely affect operational needs
- employees must obtain agreement to volunteering leave, with their line manager, before any commitment is made to a voluntary organisation
- there must be no conflicts of interest, eg political campaigning
- activities must benefit the environment, individuals, charities or community groups within Suffolk or close to the volunteers' home neighbourhoods and from which Suffolk residents benefit
- activities undertaken are with organisations who deliver services that are 'not for profit'
- activities undertaken do not cause offence and promote good relations
- any abuse of the scheme could result in disciplinary action.

5. Volunteering activities

Volunteering can be anything from helping out a neighbour to being a trustee for a charity. It can be a short one-off activity or a regular ongoing commitment. For example:

- mentoring Looked After Children and vulnerable people
- supporting vulnerable adults and disabled people
- reading and listening activities at school
- outdoor activities, eg countryside conservation or land clearance
- organising sports activities, clubs or events

- trustee for a charity
- Volunteering through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- team volunteering events

Staff can volunteer to work with any charity or through the Volunteer Bureau, provided there is no conflict of interest with our volunteering principles (see section 6 below). If the volunteering is a collective team event they can contact Community Action Suffolk or an organisation directly to discuss possible opportunities. Teams will be asked for the numbers involved, any limitations, in terms of ability, times, locations etc and to provide a range of dates for the organisation to provide a list of volunteering opportunities for teams to choose from. Teams will have to seek agreement from the line manager.

Charities rely on team and individual volunteers' support, so as much notice as possible to set up events with the chosen host should be given and any cancellations should also be notified as soon as possible in order to give the organisation time to find a replacement team.

6. Our volunteering principles

When volunteering, employees agree to:

- respect the privacy, property and confidentiality of others
- report any problems experienced to the line manager, the organisation and the Volunteer Centre (where it has acted as a broker)
- aim to fulfil the commitments made and inform the named contact in the voluntary organisation if they are unable to attend
- act in a professional way, recognising that they are in part representing the council while carrying out the volunteering activities.

The Employee Code of Conduct continues to apply to employees when volunteering. The code contains provisions that encourage the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct on the part of all employees.

It is strongly recommended that the organisation for which you volunteer is registered with a Volunteer Centre for quality assurance purposes. It is recognised however that not all volunteering opportunities are available through Volunteer Bureaus or organisations – eg a village litter pick arranged by a group of individuals.

Certain activities that involve working with young people or other vulnerable groups may require you to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS). Any requirement for DBS checks will be at the cost of the voluntary organisation and in accordance with their procedures.

It is the employee's responsibility to satisfy themselves that the volunteering organisation's quality assurance and health and safety policies are adequate.

The voluntary organisation will be responsible for providing any induction, health and safety or other training required in order that the volunteer can perform activities correctly and safely.

It is the manager's responsibility to be satisfied that there are no conflicts of interest and that staff have considered and accepted any risks. The council will not be liable for damages or injuries that occur while employees are volunteering for other organisations. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that their activities are suitably insured (or accept the personal risk they may be taking).

Volunteers will only be indemnified under the public liability policies held by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council where a council employee is volunteering in connection with services for their own council (even if in a different service area and on days not normally worked).

If employees are involved in community transport volunteering, using their own car, they will need to check that their own motor policy is suitable.

If the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided either by the organisation or the responsibility of the employee undertaking the activity.

7. More information

For more information contact human.resources@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Other useful information:

Employees Code of Conduct (available on the Intranet)

Community Action Suffolk www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Volunteer centres www.volunteercentresuffolk.co.uk

Do-it Volunteering www.do-it.org.uk

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Question from Unison West Suffolk Branch with regard to the Anglia Revenues Partnership Employment Model and Response from the Head of HR, Legal & Democratic Services



Question:

The West Suffolk Branch would like to raise the awareness of the Members of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel of the employment model at the Anglia Revenues Partnership. Approximately four years ago before the Shared Services programme was undertaken, sections of staff that worked in the Revenues, Benefits and Fraud teams, based at Bury St Edmunds moved to Thetford to work in partnership with along with three other Local Authorities under the umbrella of Anglia Revenues Partnership known as ARP.

ARP now delivers the services of delivery of benefits and collection of revenues for the four different Authorities of Breckland, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury and East Cambridgeshire. Staff now sit at desks alongside their colleagues at Breckland House in Thetford carrying out the same function, sometimes across other Authorities under the umbrella of ARP.

The anomaly that we would like to raise with you is that whilst St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath staff are now on the same Terms and Conditions, the other Breckland group of employees are on different T&Cs. An example of this is that one employee may be paid at one level, sitting alongside another, doing the same job who is employed by Breckland being paid at a different level. Another example is that one employee may have 20 days leave a year, and another 22 days. These are not exact examples, however hopefully you can see how there are differences between employees carrying out the same job sitting next to each other.

The West Suffolk Branch would ask that this situation is resolved as soon as possible so that all staff are treated equally for the tasks they undertake.

Mark Johnson
Secretary
West Suffolk Branch, Unison

Employer Response:

The ARP partnership is a grouping of councils who have come together under a Joint Committee whereby the employees share the work involved in delivering Revenues and Benefits for those Councils. The staff have remained employees of the Council for whom they work, and they receive the pay and reward package that they are entitled to under their Contract of Employment with the Council for whom they work.

So, if a member of staff is employed by Forest Heath or St Edmundsbury, they receive the same pay and rewards as all their colleagues at FHDC and at SEBC (who have the same 'West Suffolk' remuneration package).

In practical terms this means that some staff work for a West Suffolk Council and enjoy the pay and reward that they have under their Contract of Employment with the council, but they may be sitting alongside a Breckland employee who has different terms and conditions, particularly as Breckland are not part of National Joint Council pay bargaining arrangements.

The ARP HR Group has carried out some work to remove differences where it has been possible to do so – for example Breckland staff now have Flexible Working and Performance Reviews based on the West Suffolk Scheme. Pay however is a far more complex issue – there is not a clear route through either reducing or increasing the pay of those staff that happen to work at ARP, as they receive parity and equal pay based on comparison with the other employees of the Council for whom they work as required by equal pay legislation.

The ARP Joint Committee are working also on agreeing a single HR provider which would mean that a piece of work could be undertaken identifying the differences and consulting with Unison on what aspects could be harmonised without producing an inequality with their home employer.

Karen Points
Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services
West Suffolk Councils