

# West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel

Forest Heath &amp; St Edmundsbury councils

**West Suffolk**  
working together

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday 18 January 2016</b>		
<b>Time:</b>	<b>3.00 pm</b>		
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Council Chamber</b> District Offices Mildenhall		
<b>Full Members:</b>	<i>St Edmundsbury Borough Council</i> (3) (Employers' Side)  Bob Cockle Clive Springett Patricia Warby	<i>Forest Heath District Council</i> (3) (Employers' Side)  Ruth Bowman Rona Burt Stephen Edwards	<i>Staff Representatives</i> (6) (Employees' Side)  Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Claire McKenna Jane Orton Julie Roberts Vacancy
<b>Substitutes:</b>	Carol Bull Becky Hopfensperger	Brian Harvey Carol Lynch	Dawn Goss Vacancy
<b>The membership of this Panel needs not to be politically balanced.</b>			
<b>This meeting will be preceded at 2.30pm by the usual pre-briefings for the Employers' Side (Council Chamber) and the Employees' Side (Room 4)</b>			
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	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.		
<b>Quorum:</b>	Three Members; comprising a minimum of one SEBC Councillor, one FHDC Councillor and one Staff Representative		
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<b>Helen Hardinge</b> Committee Administrator & FHDC Scrutiny Support <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719363 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:helen.hardinge@westsuffolk.gov.uk">helen.hardinge@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>		

# 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. Election of Chairman for 2015/2016**

*To be appointed from the **Employers' Side***

*(Extract from the Panel's Terms of Reference:*

*"2.7 The Panel shall elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from its members. When the Chairman is a member of one side of the Panel, the Vice-Chairman shall be a member of the other side. The Chairman of the Panel shall be rotated on an annual basis between the Employees' and Employers' side. The Chairman of the meeting shall not have a casting vote.")*

*The Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2014/2015 were:*

*Mark Johnson - Chairman (Employees' Side)*

*Councillor Angela Rushen – Vice Chairman (Employers' Side)*

**2. Election of Vice-Chairman for 2015/2016**

*To be appointed from the **Employees' Side***

**3. Apologies for Absence**

**4. Substitutes**

**5. Minutes**

**1 - 4**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 (copy attached).

**6. Workforce Data**

**5 - 8**

Report No: **JSP/JT/16/001**

**7. Fit for Work Service**

**9 - 12**

Report No: **JSP/JT/16/002**

**8. Legal and Case Law Changes**

Verbal report

**9. Organisational Development Plans - Update**

Verbal report

**10. Trade Union Bill Update**

Verbal update

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# West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel



**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative** held on **Monday 20 July 2015** at **3.00 pm** at **Room GFR13, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

<b>Present:</b>	<u>St Edmundsbury Borough Council</u> (Employers' Side)	<u>Forest Heath District Council</u> (Employers' Side)	<u>Staff Representatives</u> (Employees' Side)
	Cllr Carol Bull	Cllr Ruth Bowman Cllr Stephen Edwards	Mark Johnson Jane Orton Julie Roberts

## **By Invitation**

Cllr Ian Houlder

## **8. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2015/2016**

In view of the nominations for Chairman of the Panel due to be sought from St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Employers' Side and with the three Borough Councillors appointed to the Panel having offered apologies for the meeting, it was agreed that the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2015/2016 would be postponed until the next meeting of the Panel. Mark Johnson, Employees' Side and outgoing Chairman, agreed to continue in the Chair for this meeting.

The Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services advised that Officers were looking to arrange a future meeting of the Panel during end October/beginning November 2015 and all Members would be informed of the date once scheduled.

## **9. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rona Burt (Forest Heath District Council – Employers' Side), Councillor Bob Cockle (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side), Councillor Clive Springett (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side) and Councillor Patricia Warby (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side) as well as from Lizzi Cocker and Claire McKenna (Staff Representatives – Employees' Side).

## **10. Substitutes**

Councillor Carol Bull attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Clive Springett (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side).

## 11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2015 were received and noted.

Jane Orton made reference to Minute No 4 in respect of the Employee Volunteering Scheme; she inquired as to whether any staff had made use of the scheme since the last meeting.

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) explained that HR would continue to advertise opportunities available to staff to volunteer and discussions were currently being undertaken with the Families and Communities Team with regard to a potential volunteering opportunity.

Mark Johnson made reference to Minute No 6 (Workforce Data) and the reference therein to the Member Development Session scheduled during April 2015 which was to include focus on Shared Services.

The Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services explained that the session in question had been cancelled. However, the Shared Services element had been covered both as part of the post-election Member Induction sessions and also in the pre-election candidate information briefings.

## 12. **Politically Restricted Posts (Report No JST/JT/15/002)**

The Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services presented the guidance that had been produced to ensure that West Suffolk employees in politically restricted posts did not allow any perception to arise that their own personal or political opinions had influenced or improperly interfered with their work.

The Panel was advised that all staff concerned would be informed directly of the guidance.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Politically Restricted Posts: Guidance for Officers document (attached as Appendix A to Report No JST/JT/15/002) be noted and supported.

## 13. **Shared Parental Leave and Pay Guidance (Report No JST/JT/15/003)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented the Shared Parental Leave and Pay Guidance which provided West Suffolk employees with information relating to their statutory rights with effect from 5 April 2015.

The Panel was advised that the document contained a helpful 'Frequently Asked Questions' section.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Shared Parent Leave and Pay Guidance document (attached as Appendix A to Report No JST/JT/15/003) be noted and supported.

14. **Pensions Discretion Policy (Verbal)**

The Head of HR, Legal and Democratic Services verbally advised the Panel that the Pensions Discretion Policy had been considered and approved by both Authorities' Cabinets and Councils in February 2015.

The adopted Policy document was available should anyone wish to consider it in detail.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the verbal update be noted.

15. **Workforce Data (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) delivered a presentation to the Panel which set out the West Suffolk workforce data for the period 1 October 2014 – 30 June 2015. It contained various information; including age and gender analysis, staff turnover and sickness absence.

Whilst the average West Suffolk sickness level was still far below the average nationally for Local Government employees it had risen slightly in comparison with the previously reported period. To quantify, the Officer advised the Panel that short-term absence had actually reduced, however, long-term had increased slightly largely due to a particularly challenging period with some staff being diagnosed with serious illnesses.

A question was raised as to how the West Suffolk figures compared with those of neighbouring local authorities. The Officer agreed to look into this and would provide a comparison, as far as was possible, to the next meeting of the Panel.

The Panel also asked that the headline figures from the workforce data presentation be forwarded to them for their reference and the Officer agreed to action this.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

**RESOLVED:**

That the verbal report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 3.37 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Workforce Data</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>JSP/JT/16/001</b>	
<b>Decisions plan reference:</b>	N/A	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel	18 January 2016
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Councillor Stephen Edwards Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance <b>Tel:</b> 07904389982 <b>Email:</b> stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	Councillor Ian Houlder Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance <b>Tel:</b> 07597961069 <b>Email:</b> ian.houlder@stedsbcc.gov.uk
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Karen Points Head of HR, Legal & Democratic Services <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757015 <b>Email:</b> karen.points@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To provide an update on the comparison of the workforce data for the period up to December 2015.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is recommended that the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel note and support the contents of the Workforce Data (attached as Appendix A).</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	N/A	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	N/A	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	None directly
<b>Background papers:</b> (all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)	None
<b>Documents attached:</b>	Appendix A - Workforce Data

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**Workforce Data Headlines**

**Workforce data headlines, as incorporated in the Balanced Scorecard, up to 31 December 2015**

	<b>As of 30/6/2015</b>	<b>As of 31/12/2015</b>
Headcount (All)	641	629
Headcount (Permanent)	599	596
Full Time Equivalent (All)	581.51	573.91
Full-Time Equivalent (Permanent)	541.40	543.60
Full Time v Part Time	76.91%/23.09%	77.74%/22.26%
Average Age	46	45
Gender	51.95% Male 48.05% Female	52.31% Male 47.69% Female
Staff Turnover	9.62% voluntary	10.65%
<b>Sickness Absence</b>		
Total days lost due to absence	4002	3948
Average days absence per employee	6.83 days	6.75
Short term absence	2271	2129
Long term absence	1731	1819
National Average - Local Authorities CIPD 2013	8.70 days	8.70 days

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Fit for Work Service</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>JSP/JT/16/002</b>	
<b>Decisions plan reference:</b>	N/A	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel	18 January 2016
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Councillor Stephen Edwards Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources <b>Tel:</b> 07904389982 <b>Email:</b> stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk	Councillor Ian Houlder Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources <b>Tel:</b> 07597961069 <b>Email:</b> ian.houlder@stedsbc.gov.uk
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Karen Points Head of HR, Legal & Democratic Services <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757015 <b>Email:</b> karen.points@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To outline and provide an update on the Government-funded service, which provides Occupational Health assessments on referral from the employee's GP or employer, where an employee is absent from work for at least four weeks. It also provides advice for employers, employees and GPs on matters relating to health and work.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is recommended that, the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel note and support the contents of the Fit for Work Service (attached as Appendix A).</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	N/A	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	N/A	

<b>Implications:</b>	
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	None directly
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	None
<b>Documents attached:</b>	Appendix A - Fit for Work Service

**Update for West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel:  
Fit for Work Service**

1. Fit for Work is a Government-funded service providing occupational health assessments on referral from the employee's GP or employer, where an employee is absent from work for at least four weeks. It, also, provides advice for employers, employees and GPs on matters relating to health and work. The assessment referral service came into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The advice service is delivered through a website and telephone helpline.
2. Where an employee is referred to the service, an adviser from the Fit for Work service will carry out an occupational health assessment, usually over the phone. The employee will be provided with a return-to-work plan, with recommendations for steps that could help him or her to return to work. The return-to-work plan will be shared with the employer, unless the employee does not consent to this.
3. The employee will have a case manager at the Fit for Work service, who can arrange a further assessment, if necessary. The employee will be discharged from the service:
  - on returning to work;
  - at the point when the service can no longer provide assistance (if this occurs within the first three months of absence); or
  - if he or she has not returned to work after three months.
4. Essentially, this service is for employers who have a limited occupational health service or no occupational health service at all.
5. The key thing to be aware of as an employer, is that GPs can refer people to the service, and we might not be aware this has happened if the employee is on long term sick leave. We need to make sure that at home visits, when managers are keeping in touch and at return to work interviews, we find out if they have been referred to the service.
6. The guidance states that this service will complement and not replace any existing occupational health services provided by employers. We, therefore, continue in the same way. Any advice from Fit for Work should be taken into account as part of the process, along with the advice we would obtain from WorkFit.

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