

West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

Minutes of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel**

held on

Monday 29 January 2018 at 3.00 pm at GFR-14, West Suffolk House,
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present:

Chairman Rona Burt
Vice Chairman Mark Johnson

Forest Heath District Council
(Employer's Side)
Cllr Stephen Edwards

St Edmundsbury Borough Council
(Employer's Side)
Cllr Patricia Warby

Staff Representatives
(Employees' Side)
Julie Roberts

Substitutes attending: Cllr Brian Harvey

53. Councillor Resignation

Following the publication of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel agenda for the meeting on 29 January 2018, Councillor Bob Cockle (St Edmundsbury Borough Council - Employers' Side) had tendered his resignation as a Borough Councillor and therefore did not attend the meeting.

54. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors' Ruth Bowman (Forest Heath District Council - Employer's Side), Clive Springett (St Edmundsbury Borough Council - Employer's Side), Lizzi Cocker and Jane Orton (Staff Representatives - Employees' Side).

55. Substitutes

Councillor Brian Harvey attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Ruth Bowman (Forest Heath District Council - Employer's Side).

56. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

57. Update on Anglia Revenues Partnership HR Progress

The HR Business Partner updated the Panel on the HR progress that had been made at Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) from October 2015 to present. The Panel were informed that there had been a large focus on developing the skills and knowledge of existing staff and this was being achieved by offering specialist training courses as well as encouraging staff to take up secondment opportunities, apprenticeships, job shadowing and job rotation. Flexible working arrangements had also been introduced whereby staff had the option to apply to work from a variety of work bases suitable for them. The feedback from staff in relation to these initiatives had been positive.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the HR Business Partner explained that the HR processes for all of the host Councils at ARP were managed by herself. In addition, the HR Business Partner ensured that each host Council retained their original establishment of numbers and type of job posts, and any new posts would be appropriately allocated to each Council.

There being no decision required, the Panel noted the update.

58. Update on the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented Report No: JSP/JT/18/001 which updated the Panel on the progress towards achieving the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

The Council was assessed by a Panel of representatives from Suffolk County Council Public Health, Norfolk County Council Public Health and Public Health England on 25 October 2017. The assessment process was explained to the Panel by the Service Manager, and on 10 November 2017 the Council was advised that it had successfully achieved accreditation to the Charter. The Council achieved the standard of excellence in four of the eight categories and achievement with recommendations to reach excellence in the next six to nine months for the remaining four categories.

The Service Manager explained that the various health and wellbeing initiatives that had been offered to staff up until the point of achieving accreditation to the Charter would continue to be offered for the foreseeable future.

There being no decision required, the Panel noted the report.

59. Update on Assistant Director Recruitment Programme

The Panel received an update from the Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) on the Recruitment Programme for the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) post. The advert had been posted on the Council's website as well as other specialist publications on 15 January 2018 and would close on 12 February 2018 with an assessment centre arranged for 1 March 2018.

The Panel thanked the current Assistant Director for all her hard work during the 15 years employed by St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and more recently as part of the shared services arrangements for West Suffolk.

There being no decision required, the Panel noted the update.

60. West Suffolk Workforce Data

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented Report No: JSP/JT/18/002 which set out the West Suffolk Workforce data for the period up to 31 December 2017. The report also provided a comparison between the data as it stood now and with that reported to previous meetings of the Panel from 2015 to 2017.

Overall there were no significant changes to the data since the previous reporting period; however, the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) highlighted that the number of permanent, full time equivalent (FTE) employees had increased since 2015 and was forecasted to continue increasing. Councillor Stephen Edwards (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, Forest Heath District Council) confirmed that the costs associated with the increase in FTE had been covered by the West Suffolk Councils without having to seek additional funding.

The Service Manager reported that the current sickness absence figures were the lowest they had been within the last two years.

There being no decision required, the Panel noted the report.

61. Any Other Business

The Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) briefly updated the Panel on the current National Local Government Pay Negotiations that had been offered to Unison that would cover the period April 2018 to March 2020. The Panel were informed that Unison members would be voting on the offer during February 2018.

The Chairman of the Panel suggested that in the future it would not be necessary to hold pre-briefing meetings for either the Employer or Employees sides unless there were any items of particular significance on the agenda. This was agreed to by the rest of the Panel.

The Meeting concluded at 4.16 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
