

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 24 September 2018** at **3.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present:

<u>Forest Heath District Council</u> (Employers' Side) Cllr Rona Burt Cllr Stephen Edwards	<u>St Edmundsbury Borough Council</u> (Employers' Side) Cllr Patricia Warby Cllr David Nettleton	<u>Staff Representatives</u> (Employees' Side) Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Julie Roberts
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By Invitation: Cllr Ian Houlder attended in his capacity as St Edmundsbury Portfolio Holder (Resources and Performance), to observe the meeting.

62. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ruth Bowman J.P. and Councillor Clive Springett from the Employers' Side and Claire McKenna and Jane Orton from the Employees' side.

63. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes present.

64. **Election of Chairman: 2018/2019**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Mark Johnson be elected as Chairman of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel for the year 2018/2019.

65. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman: 2018/2019**

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Nettleton be elected as Vice-Chairman of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel for the year 2018/2019.

66. **Minutes**

Members' queried whether a copy of the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter would be made available to display in the Council's offices as suggested at the previous meeting. The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) confirmed that copies would be made available.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67. **Unison Meeting Structure**

The Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) explained that the Council had been working with Unison to develop a more formal and efficient way of working together. The Panel were informed that a Committee would be set up comprising of members of the Human Resources team, staff representatives from other service areas and Unison representatives with the intention of holding meetings bi-monthly. The main objectives of the Committee would be to improve communication between Unison and its members, and provide a more formal and accessible platform for consultation on various topics.

In response to questions raised by the Panel, the Assistant Director gave examples of items that could potentially be brought to the Committee for discussion, the outcomes of which would be fed into the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel.

There being no decision required, the Panel **NOTED** the update.

68. **West Suffolk Workforce Development Annual Report 2017-2018**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented Report No: JSP/JT/18/003 which set out the annual Workforce Development Data for Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils for 2017-2018. In previous meetings of the Panel workforce data had been reported quarterly, however it felt appropriate to present the full annual report at the meeting.

Overall, there were no significant changes to the data since the previous reporting period. The Service Manager summarised each section of the report and responded to various queries raised by Members in relation to the data.

It was highlighted to the Panel that the total headcount had increased due to the growth of certain service areas. The average age remained similar, although the Panel were informed that the Council had been recruiting an increased number of apprentices and younger people on career pathways.

Pleasingly, the figures for staff turnover remained lower than the average for Local Authorities in the area and staff sickness absence had continued to decrease since the last reporting period. The Service Manager explained that the Council had been offering various health initiatives and training to all staff which was believed to have led staff being able to manage mental health and sickness more effectively.

The number of apprentices recruited in the organisation had increased, with the Council still recruiting to various posts. It was brought to the Panel's attention that particular success had been achieved with recruiting apprentices to the Planning team and Legal team who had gone on to secure permanent contracts of employment with the Council.

There being no decision required, the Panel **NOTED** the report.

69. **Single Council Update**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) updated the Panel on the progress made in relation to the Human Resources and Payroll processes towards Single Council. The Human Resources team had been working closely with East Suffolk Councils (Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils) to achieve similar timescales in implementing the necessary changes to their processes.

The Service Manager explained that the Payroll team had been working towards combining the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Payroll and a full test would be run in October 2018. Any changes to the payroll process would be communicated to all staff and Councillors to ensure they are aware of how to manage the submission of expense claims and annual leave throughout the period of transition to the new Council.

There being no decisions required, the Panel **NOTED** the update.

70. **Workforce Strategy Update**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisation Development) updated the Panel on the Council's Workforce Strategy and reminded them of the five main work streams that had been focused on.

Recently the Human Resources team had been reviewing the Council's Performance Development Review (PDR) scheme along with the organisation's Core Values and Behaviours. Staff workshops had been arranged to collect feedback from staff to help form the new PDR scheme and Core Values. Once a final draft had been formed, the Assistant Director (HR, Legal and Democratic Services) would present it to Leadership Team for approval.

The Panel were informed that the Human Resources team had also been focusing on the recruitment and retention of Council staff. Research had been undertaken to understand what attracted people to work for West Suffolk along with new staff initiatives that the Council could potentially offer in the future to enhance the employee benefits package.

Staff wellbeing continued to be a high priority focus for the Human Resources team and the Council had been working closely with Occupational Health to offer an annual calendar of Health and Wellbeing initiatives for all staff. Positive feedback had been received from staff who had participated in some of the initiatives.

The Service Manager explained that the Workforce Strategy would be shared across the organisation once it had been completed.

There being no decision required, the Panel **NOTED** the update.

The Meeting concluded at 4.26 pm

This was the last meeting of the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel before its dissolution on 6 May 2019. As a result, the minutes of the meeting remain as drafted following the meeting and cannot be confirmed by the West Suffolk Joint Staff Consultative Panel and signed by the Chair. This is consistent with all other dissolved committees and bodies.

Signed by:

Chairman
