

Staff Consultative Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Panel** held on **Monday 8 July 2019** at **3.00 pm** in the **Room GFR-14, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Members
(Employer's Side)**

John Griffiths
David Nettleton
Ian Shipp
David Smith

**Staff Representatives
(Employees' Side)**

Lizzi Cocker
Mark Johnson
Penny Mills
Julie Roberts
Richard Smith

**Substitutes
(Employer's Side)**

Sara Mildmay-White

1. **Substitutes**

The following substitution was declared:

Councillor Sara Mildmay-White was substituting for Councillor Carol Bull (Employer's Side).

2. **Election of Chair: 2019/2020**

The approved Terms of Reference for the Staff Consultative Panel required that the Chair of the Panel be rotated between the Employer's and Employees' Sides. When the Chair was a Member of one side of the Panel, the Vice Chair shall be a Member of the other side.

In 2029/2020, the Chair was required to be elected from the Employer's Side and therefore, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Nettleton be elected as Chair of the Staff Consultative Panel for the year 2019/2020.

3. **Election of Vice-Chair: 2019/2020**

The approved Terms of Reference for the Staff Consultative Panel required that the Vice Chair shall alternate between the Employer's and Employees' Sides.

As the Chair of the Panel was from the Employer's Side in 2019/2020, the Vice Chair was required to be elected from the Employees' Side and therefore, it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Mark Johnson be elected as Vice Chair of the Staff Consultative Panel for the year 2019/2020.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Bull (Employer's Side) and from Jane Orton (Employees' Side).

Councillors James Lay and Clive Springett (Employer's Side) were also unable to attend the meeting.

5. Maternity and Paternity Leave and Pay (Report No: SCP/WS/19/001)

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this report which informed the Panel of amendments which had been made to the Maternity and Paternity Leave and Pay Policy and Procedures.

The Service Manager outlined the following changes which had been made:

12. Statutory paternity leave and pay

The policy had now enhanced the entitlement to statutory paternity leave, if an employee had at least 52 weeks' service at the end of the qualifying period, allowing them to be able to take up to two weeks' leave on full pay.

27. Parental Bereavement Leave

Taking into account Government legislation which was to be introduced from April 2020, the Policy had also been amended to reflect that parents and primary carers who suffered the loss of a child would be entitled to two weeks' paid parental bereavement, under the Parental Bereavement (Pay and Leave) Act. People's eligibility to receive the entitlement had been widened beyond just parents, following feedback from a consultation that had been held in 2018.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Service Manager also explained that the Council would be looking to also introduce policies around premature birth and miscarriages.

There being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the amendments which had been made to this Policy.

6. West Suffolk Workforce Development Annual Data 2018/2019 (Report No: SCP/WS/19/002)

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this report which set out the West Suffolk Workforce Development

Annual Data for the period up to 31 March 2019. This data was also published on the Council's website on an annual basis, as part of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.

The main discussion of the data by the Panel centred around:

- The **Headcount (Permanent and Temporary)** had increased from 655 to 710. This was due to extra resourcing which had been required in the Families and Communities service area and the Operations service area due to project/legislative work. Additional staffing resources had also been required with regards to the implementation of the new West Suffolk Council. In terms of the requirements around the legislative work, funding had been sourced from the Government for these additional resourcing costs.
- The **Headcount (casuals)** was also discussed and the Service Manager outlined the reasons for the requirement of casual employees in those service areas listed within the report. The Panel requested that in future reporting, whether more detail could be included regarding the types of employment of casuals in service areas. The Service Manager confirmed that when next reported, this further information would be included.
- **Sickness absence** - the average days lost per FTE had reduced to 4.81 (in 2018/19) from 5.84 (in 2017/18). The Panel also stated that they would also like to see included in future reporting, data regarding long term sickness absence, alongside the short term sickness absence data.
- **Corporate training** - The Panel noted that the corporate training events attended by part time employees was significantly lower than for full time employees. This was acknowledged and the Service Manager stated that liaison would take place with the Learning and Development Service to see if this imbalance could be addressed.

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

7. **Workforce Strategy 2018-2020 - Update (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) informed the Panel that the Workforce Strategy, approved in April 2018, set out the necessary actions to support, develop and achieve the priorities of the Council. The Strategy had set out five strategic priorities which focussed on:-

- Skills and Behaviours
- Recruitment and Retention
- Pay, Reward and Recognition
- Health and Well-being
- Workforce Planning and Data

The Action Plan for the Strategy was also circulated at the meeting and the Service Manager went through these actions and provided an update on progress on the delivery of the strategic priorities to the Panel.

The Panel commended the work which was being undertaken to deliver this Strategy, along with the acknowledgement of the continued increasing demand on the provision of services.

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

8. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Panel noted the dates for future meetings, as listed below. All dates were Mondays starting at 3.00 pm and would be held in the venues, as indicated:

- Monday 4 November 2019; College Heath Road, Mildenhall

The meeting concluded at 4.13 pm

Signed by:

Chair
