

Extraordinary Staff Consultative Panel



Title:	Agenda																				
Date:	Monday 23 March 2020																				
Time:	3.00 pm																				
Venue:	Room GFR-12 West Suffolk House Western Way Bury St Edmunds																				
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: right;">Chair David Nettleton (Employer's Side)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Vice Chair Mark Johnson (Employees' Side)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><u>West Suffolk Council</u></td> <td style="width: 33%;"><u>Staff</u></td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>(7)</u></td> <td><u>Representatives (7)</u></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>(Employer's Side)</u></td> <td><u>(Employees' Side)</u></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><u>Conservative Group (5)</u></td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Carol Bull John Griffiths James Lay David Nettleton Clive Springett </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Penelope Mills Jane Orton Julie Roberts Richard Smith (Vacancy) </td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>The Independent Group (1)</u></td> <td>Ian Shipp</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Labour Group (1)</u></td> <td>David Smith</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			<u>West Suffolk Council</u>	<u>Staff</u>		<u>(7)</u>	<u>Representatives (7)</u>		<u>(Employer's Side)</u>	<u>(Employees' Side)</u>		<u>Conservative Group (5)</u>	Carol Bull John Griffiths James Lay David Nettleton Clive Springett	Lizzi Cocker Mark Johnson Penelope Mills Jane Orton Julie Roberts Richard Smith (Vacancy)	<u>The Independent Group (1)</u>	Ian Shipp		<u>Labour Group (1)</u>	David Smith	
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Substitutes:	<u>Conservative Group (1)</u>	Sara Mildmay-White	Oliver Ingwall-King (Vacancy)																		
	<u>The Independent Group (1)</u>	Andy Neal																			
	<u>Labour Group (1)</u>	Cliff Waterman																			
<p>Note: This Panel is not governed by the normal Access to Information rules (The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012) in the Council. Therefore these meetings are not open to attendance by the public.</p>																					
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:	Four members, comprising at least two employee representatives and two Members of the Council.
Committee administrator:	Sharon Turner Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01638 719237 Email: sharon.turner@westsuffolk.gov.uk

Agenda

Note: Whilst these agenda papers are not covered by the normal Access to Information Rules (see agenda front), where items are listed as containing exempt/confidential information, members of the Panel are requested to treat them as such.

1. Substitutes

Any member (which includes councillors and staff representatives) who is substituting for another member should so indicate, together with the name of the relevant absent member.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

1 - 6

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 (attached)

4. Employee Assistance Programme and Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

7 - 10

Briefing Note attached.

5. Apprentices and Interns Update

11 - 12

Briefing Note attached.

6. West Suffolk Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021 - Update

Update on the West Suffolk Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021, prior to being presented to Council on 31 March 2020 for approval

7. Workforce SWOT Analysis

13 - 14

Verbal briefing regarding the purpose of the SWOT analysis, the Council's approach and the next steps (SWOT analysis attached)

8. West Suffolk Workforce Data Headlines

An update to be provided on the latest information on the West Suffolk Workforce Data.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The following dates for future meetings of the Panel are listed below. All dates are Mondays starting at 3.00 pm and will be held at the venue as indicated:

- Monday 20 July 2020 at College Heath Road, Mildenhall
- Monday 9 November 2020 at West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
- Monday 29 March 2020 at College Heath Road, Mildenhall

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Staff Consultative Panel



Minutes of a meeting of the **Staff Consultative Panel** held on **Monday 4 November 2019** at **3.00 pm** in the **Council Chamber, District Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present:

Chair David Nettleton (Employer's side)
Vice Chair Mark Johnson (Employees' side)

Members (Employer's side)

Carol Bull
James Lay

Substitutes attending for a full Member (Employer's side)

Sara Mildmay-White

Staff Representatives (Employees' side)

Lizzi Cocker
Julie Roberts

Substitutes attending for a staff representative (Employees' side)

Paul Davison

9. **Substitutes**

The following substitutions were declared:

Councillor Sara Mildmay-White was substituting for Councillor Clive Springett (Employer's Side).

Paul Davison was substituting for Richard Smith (Employees' Side).

10. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Griffiths, Clive Springett and Ian Shipp (Employer's Side) and from Penny Mills, Jane Orton and Richard Smith (Employees' Side).

Councillor David Smith (Employer's Side) was also unable to attend the meeting.

11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following typographical amendment:

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

Second paragraph, first sentence - the words '*In 2029/2020..*', be amended to read '*In 2019/2020..*'

12. **West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2018-2020 - Update (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) provided an update on the actions within the Workforce Strategy, which had been approved in April 2018. The Panel were reminded that the Strategy 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 following updates were then provided:

Skills and Behaviours

- Service restructures
- Learning and Development / Skills and Training / Corporate Training Programmes
- Apprenticeship Levy
- Review of the first year implementation of the Personal Development Review (PDR) Scheme

Recruitment and Retention

- The development of the Council's recruitment website (this item was also the subject of a demonstration later on the agenda)
- Recruitment and retention within the public sector in Suffolk
- Apprenticeships

Pay, Reward and Recognition

- Non-financial benefits for staff

Health and Well-being

- Health checks and workplace well-being (including cholesterol checks; under 40's health checks; flu vaccinations; men's health awareness month; mental health awareness)

Workforce Planning and Data

- This item was subject to a presentation later on the agenda

Some Members of the Panel expressed their concerns with regard to the low rate of pay for apprentices and whether this would prevent some people from being able to afford to apply for an apprenticeship post. The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) explained that the National Apprenticeship Wage rate was paid for the first year of their employment (which was currently £3.90 per hour) and then they received the national minimum wage (dependent on age) for the remainder of their apprenticeship. If apprentices were appointed to a permanent post before they had completed their qualification, then they were moved to the

appropriate salary for the job and would continue to be supported until they finished their studies.

Following on from the concerns raised by the Panel, the Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) agreed to look at the demographics of the Apprentices, to ascertain whether the rate of pay was affecting where people were choosing to apply from.

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

13. **West Suffolk Workforce Data Headlines
(Report No: SCP/WS/19/003)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this report which provided a snapshot of the West Suffolk Workforce Data for the last three quarters from 1 January to 30 September 2019.

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

- **Length of service**
Members queried as to whether data was available which showed the length of service for employees. The Officer explained that this was not shown specifically within the Workforce Data, but this could be collated and made available to the Panel.
- **Staff turnover (Voluntary)**
Members queried with regard to those employees who left the organisation, whether it would be possible to provide the numbers of those who had moved into jobs within the private sector.
- **Sickness absence**
Members queried as to whether the sickness absence data could be split down into full-time employees and part-time employees.

With regards to the additional data requests which had been made above, it was agreed that this information would be circulated to the Panel for their information.

With there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the report.

14. **Strategic Workforce Planning (Presentation)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) provided a presentation ([see link](#)) which explained how the Council was looking at an organisation wide strategic approach to managing its workforce.

It was explained that this approach would connect workforce planning with financial planning and service delivery. It would assist with the identification of factors that may impact on the workplace plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and any potential skills gaps/succession plans.

Part of this approach would also include a monthly workforce planning meeting (with the first meeting having been held on 31 October 2019) to review the workforce data, along with a review of the vacant roles and any resourcing requests. The length of time for a job advertisement was to be increased to one month, which was in line with other public sector partners. The decisions made at the meeting would then be made available to the relevant Assistant Director.

The Panel expressed their support for this strategic approach to workforce planning and with there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the content of the presentation.

15. **West Suffolk Council Recruitment Website (Demonstration)**

The Panel received a demonstration of the new West Suffolk Council dedicated Recruitment Website (<https://recruitment.westsuffolk.gov.uk/>).

It was explained that the Website had been developed to link in with the Council's five core values and behaviours (PRIDE):

- **P**eople: Working positively together with empathy, compassion and respect.
- **R**esponsibility: Taking ownership and being accountable for our own actions.
- **I**ntegrity: Making an honest, open and ethical approach to all we do.
- **D**edication: Focusing on the delivery of our priorities, wanting the best for West Suffolk's communities and businesses.
- **E**nergy: Delivering high standards of performance and being committed to continually improving our work.

The Website was divided into the following Sections:-

- About Us (*Our Services; the West Suffolk area; Values and Behaviours*)
- Why Work for Us (*a culture of learning; Health and wellbeing*)
- Kickstart your Career (*Apprenticeships; Graduates; Internships; Work Experience*)
- Applicant Guidance (*Equal Opportunities; Disability Confident Employer*)
- Current vacancies

The Website also included various quotes from West Suffolk Council employees explaining as to why they personally considered that the Council was a good place to work.

The Panel commended this new Website and its content and with there being no decision required, the Panel **noted** the demonstration.

16. **Sophie Claydon Apprentice Award (Verbal)**

The Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development) presented this item and explained to the Panel that a new award to recognise and celebrate the performance of the Council's Apprentices was to be launched this year. The Sophie Claydon Apprentice Award, which was sponsored by UNISON, was in memory of Sophie who began her career with

the Council as an apprentice in HR and who demonstrated the values and beliefs that West Suffolk Council shared today.

The Annual Award would be open to current Apprentices, on Apprenticeship Contracts, who had been in post for at least six months, as well as former Apprentices who had moved into roles in the Council during the period 1 January to 31 August 2019. Nominations were due to open this week and would close on Thursday 21 November 2019.

The nominations would be judged by a Panel, which would also include the Portfolio Holder for Governance. The winner and details of all nominations would be announced at the December staff briefings. The winner would receive a prize and a shield engraved with their name which they would keep until the following year. All nominees would be presented with a certificate.

There being no decision required, the Panel expressed their support for this Award, which they considered was a lovely gesture in the memory of Sophie.

17. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The Panel **noted** that there were no further meetings of the Panel scheduled in the Calendar of Meetings for 2019/2020. However, the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Service Manager (Human Resources and Organisational Development), proposed that an extraordinary meeting be convened in March 2020, so that the Panel could continue to be kept regularly updated on workforce matters.

Therefore, it was **agreed** for an additional meeting date in March 2020 to be confirmed to the Panel in due course.

The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm

Signed by:

Chair

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Extraordinary Staff Consultative Panel: Monday 23 March 2020

Briefing Note on the Employee Assistance Programme

Currently our well-being support for staff includes health and wellbeing events which run throughout the year focusing on key national initiatives and a range of other initiatives; health and wellbeing intranet page; occupational health service offering both self-referral and referrals; onsite health check-ups; free flu vaccinations; cycle2work scheme; Neyber financial wellbeing package and education platform; purchase of annual leave scheme; discounted gym membership; eye test reimbursement for VDU work; mediation; mentoring; coaching; counselling, physio; flexible working options; West Suffolk We Save financial savings scheme and opportunities for volunteering through the volunteering policy. We also support well-being champions throughout the services and mental health first aiders.

The current offer is available to all our staff although some of the support will be provided through assessment and discussion with employees and their managers and rely on request.

There has been an increase demand on well-being related support and counselling services and some of this support has been sought through new and specialist providers to deal with complex cases.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

An EAP, is an employer paid scheme, that enables employees to contact an independent adviser, on a confidential basis, to discuss any issue that is causing them stress, worry, and which could be interfering with their health, performance and attendance. It bridges the gap for those staff who may only wish to deal with personal issues confidentially and not through formal request, giving them the opportunity to have discussions outside of their normal work time and provide support in evenings and weekends where this may not normally be readily available.

Schemes available offer confidential helplines on 24/7 basis including counselling, doctor help line, prescription services, legal support, support for employees and their families. The provider, Westfield Health, also have access to the Big White Wall, which is the leading digital mental health service providing a full range of online support including self-help and on line courses for concerns of alcohol and drug abuse; anxiety and eating disorders and are registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Conclusion

Agreement to fund an Employee Assistant Programme for a period of two years, to gain valuable insight into how this may benefit staff performance, behaviour and attendance.

It is intended as part of the HR delivery plan for the new Workforce Strategy over the next four years to conduct a review of all well-being initiatives and associated spend (including counselling) and the impact of EAP would be part of this piece of work.

We will also be working with Westfield Health to develop a range of performance data that we can access throughout the contract and to deliver an information session for Service Managers in order that the EAP be cascaded down through the services.

It is clear that a proactive approach to the EAP will be needed to introduce the offer to the depot staff, this will be achieved through the health initiatives delivered at the depots throughout the year.

Wellbeing staff benefits

As an organisation, we offer plenty of staff benefits. Below is a list with a brief description of some of those benefits. Please ask the HR team for more information.

Health and wellbeing intranet page: Events calendar, articles, list of Mental Health First Aiders, useful links on wellbeing, more information to be added for 2020.

Health and wellbeing events: Talks and professional people to speak with and share information on subjects such as diabetes, sleep, mental health, exercise, menopause and skin cancer – just some of the events that have been covered.

Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs): MHFAs are a point of contact if you are, or someone you are concerned about is, experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. They are not therapists or psychiatrists, but they can give you initial support and signpost you to appropriate help if required.

Wellbeing champions: The champions across all service areas promote and support wellbeing events and are people to talk through ideas with.

Occupational health service: Provide medical advice and support.

Flexible working options: Flexible start and finish times, working from home, compressed hours. These are just a few of the flexible working options.

Learning and development opportunities: Apprenticeships, access to nationally recognised qualifications, undertaking approved development, shared learning, on-the-job development, in-house/corporate training and plenty more.

West Suffolk We Save/financial saving: Discounts on cinema tickets, supermarkets and high street shops, cashback on holidays and money off household bills and much more. Check out the app or website. More information available on the intranet – click on Our people/Pay and rewards.

Neyber/financial wellbeing: Gives you tips and ideas on managing your money better, savings and investments. Check out the website. More information on the intranet – click on Our people/Pay and rewards.

Cycle2work scheme: Monthly payments via your payslip to help you to get moving and support a healthier you.

Purchase of annual leave scheme: Up to 10 days per annum.

Discounted Abbeycroft Leisure gym membership: Multi-site access to gym, swim and group exercise classes for just £25 per month on a six-month commitment period (normally £35).

Free onsite health checks: Advertised on the intranet via 'What's new'.

Free flu vaccinations.

Eye test reimbursement up to £25: VDU glasses contribution up to £55.

Mediation: Trained mediators to assist and support a situation and develop a plan to move forward.

Mentoring/coaching: We have several in-house mentors – ask your HR business partner for more information.

Counselling: Speak to your HR business partner for more information.

Physio: Speak to your HR business partner for more information.

Volunteering scheme: Great way to support our community and those around us.

LifeLink Coordinators: Staff can be referred to LifeLink Coordinators who support people by connecting them to social activities, clubs and groups that are on offer in the community.



Extraordinary Staff Consultative Panel: Monday 23 March 2020

Briefing Note: Apprentices and Interns Update

Our new apprentice cohort began to join the organisation from September 2019 and we currently have 12 in total, within a variety of roles spread across the Authority.

As part of their induction programme they undertook a series of training and development sessions including a tour of the district which covered Haverhill, Newmarket, Brandon County Park, Mildenhall, West Stow and Bury St Edmunds they were accompanied by Cllr Ian Shipp and Damien Parker, Service Manager (Leisure & Culture).

UNISON organised a funded trip to the Houses of Parliament for the apprentices on 26 November 2019, which was very successful and incredibly informative. Apprentices also visited the UNISON Head Office in London as part of this trip.

The National Apprenticeship week took place from 3 February 2020, the theme for this was 'Look Beyond' and focussed on the value that apprentices bring to organisations.

- **Monday 3 February – Apprenticeship Information Point:** Staff and apprentices hosted a stall in West Suffolk House reception area, providing information to employees and members of the public.
- **Tuesday 4 February – Look Beyond:** Apprentices were given the opportunity to learn more about the council and its services by talking to service managers in a fun way.
- **Tuesday Evening – Parents' Information:** Members of the HR team and an apprentice represented the council at West Suffolk College.
- **Wednesday 5 February – Careers 'Apprentices' Fayre at Thurston School:** Three of our apprentices, who were former students at Thurston, accompanied a member of HR to the careers fayre and spoke to pupils and teachers about their experiences and about our apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.
- **Thursday morning 6 February – What do you need to know about managing apprentices?** Drop-in session at College Heath Road for managers, team leaders and supervisors who either have an apprentice or are thinking of having one.
- **Thursday afternoon 6 February – Bake Sale:** Organised and hosted by the apprentices, the bake sale at West Suffolk House raised an amazing £200.37 for the [Butterfly Appeal](#) at West Suffolk Hospital which is this year's Chairman's Charity.
- **Friday 7 February – Litter Picking Session:** A group of apprentices went out and about litter picking around Bury St Edmunds as part of the Great British Spring Clean (launched on 25 January and runs from 20 March to 13 April). Although there were some whose enthusiasm waned at the prospect of picking up litter in the bitterly cold weather, everyone got stuck in, pulled their weight and

made it a light-hearted, sociable hour of team camaraderie. And they collected four full sacks of rubbish.

This is the first year that we have recruited for interns directly and we have had 45 applications for seven posts. These have been shortlisted down to 25 for the assessment day taking place on Thursday 9 April 2020.

The placements this year are:

- Customer Services and Transformation
- Energy and Environment
- Families and Communities
- Leisure and Culture
- Licensing
- Place Delivery and Strategic Property
- Planning Development

The project has yet to be confirmed but it is likely to be about transport issues/concerns involving staff travel, electric vehicles, our schools anti-idling campaign, cycling to work, eco driving and clean air day.

Workforce SWOT

Strengths

Organisation

- What are your critical positions? (These positions are those that have the most impact or significance on your core business. These positions can be at any level in the organisation)
- Do you have special skills within your business? How do you recruit into these positions?
- What are the key strengths of your workforce?

Employee specific

- Who are the strongest employees and what are their greatest skills and competencies? How do you identify these employees?

Weaknesses

Organisation

- Are there any skills gaps that you can identify that impact on your ability to deliver your service?
- Is employee turnover a problem and why are employees leaving? Are they repeatedly leaving the same roles?
- What are the business disruptions employee turnover is causing? How can we manage these differently in the future?
- Do you lack certain skills within your service area and why?
- Which functions are lacking in top talent/why?
- Are there any changes upcoming that may impact on the well-being of your staff which need to be considered and what support can be offered?

Employee specific

- Who are your low performers and what are their weaknesses?
- Are any of these employees working in the wrong position and could be better suited in another position?



Opportunities

- Where can you market current and future positions in order to source talent/specialist skills?
- How can you build a pipeline for future roles?
- Do your strengths offer you the option of doing something else with your staff?
- How can we work with other partners to enable pathways for staff to develop/progress?
- What does the wider system offer your service and what practices will be required to support this?
- How can we develop staff and what new/different roles may need to be developed to meet future needs?
- What are the implications of the strategic plan/local plan on your workforce requirements?
- What are the anticipated changes that will affect your department (external factors)?
- What could your workforce make-up look like in the future? Are there any changes to your workforce that could be considered?
- Are you planning any changes to the delivery of your services?
- Have potential leaders been identified to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency in the long term and what support is in place?
- Are there any technological or equipment needs which could assist you to deliver your key responsibilities or improve workforce efficiencies?

Threats

- What employees are you likely to lose/what changes in establishment are you anticipating and why?
- Is there any new legislation that could impact on your resourcing and why?
- How may future budget challenges impact on your resourcing requirements?
- Is the industry changing to make any skills obsolete?
- Is your technology still relevant and what impact could technology have on how you deliver your services in the future?
- Are there any factors that are impacting on employee sickness and how can you overcome these?

