

WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE PANEL

MONDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

3.00PM - 4.03PM

Members Present

Forest Heath District Council
 (Employers' Side)

St Edmundsbury Borough
Council (Employers' Side)

Staff Representatives
 (Employees' Side)

Councillor S J Edwards
 Councillor G Jaggard

Councillor R Cockle
 Councillor Mrs A Rushen

M Johnson
 C McKenna

Also in attendance

V Abbott, HR Business Partner
 J Maguire, HR Business Partner
 K Points, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
 H Hardinge, Committee Administrator & FHDC Scrutiny Support

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Simmons (Forest Heath District Council – Employers' Side), Councillor C Springett (St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Employers' Side) and from L Cocker, J Orton, S Rackham and J Roberts (Staff Representatives – Employees' Side).

Substitutes

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
032	<u>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2014/2015</u> Mr M Johnson (Employees' Side) be elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2014/2015.	RESOLVED
033	<u>APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2014/2015</u> Councillor Mrs A Rushen be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for 2014/2015.	RESOLVED

	ITEMS OF BUSINESS	RECOMMENDATION
034	<p><u>SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2014</u></p> <p>The schedule of recommendations from the meeting held on 16 January 2014 were received and noted subject to Councillor Mrs Rushen's initial being amended to read A (as opposed to S).</p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development made reference to Minute No 029 and the reference therein to the requirement to provide VAT receipts for fuel purchases when making mileage claims. The Panel were advised that the Councils were in the process of moving over to an electronic system of submitting mileage claims via the MiHR programme which currently administered employees' annual leave. Under the new system the authorities would no longer request VAT receipts for fuel, however, the HMRC advised that individuals should keep these for their own records. A full communications plan was currently being developed to promote the new way of working.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>
035	<p><u>WEST SUFFOLK WORKFORCE UPDATE – PRESENTATION</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development delivered a presentation to the Panel which set out the Workforce Development Data for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 for the West Suffolk authorities.</p> <p>It contained various information including; age and gender analysis, reasons for leaving and staff turnover. The Panel's attention was drawn to the average employee sickness level which stood at 5.67 days for 2013/2014 which was far lower than the average nationally for Local Government which was currently 7.6 days. The Head of Service explained that she would be communicating this significant achievement to all Members of both authorities.</p> <p>Mark Johnson spoke in support of the absence review meetings that had taken place over the period, he considered these meetings to have been fundamental in identifying support needed by staff and thereby reducing the level of sickness absence.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
036	<p><u>JOINT WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2014-2016 (REPORT NO JSP14/008)</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2014-2016 which set out how the authorities would recruit and develop their workforce.</p>	

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	<p>The Head of Service explained that it was imperative for the Councils to have the people, skills and behaviours needed to ensure that the priorities in the Corporate Plan were delivered.</p> <p>The Panel was asked to recommend approval of the Strategy to both authorities Cabinets for formal adoption.</p> <p>Members posed a number of questions which the HR Officers present responded to.</p> <p>Mark Johnson drew attention to the introduction on Page 1 of the Strategy, specifically the last bullet point on the page and the sentence: "<i>When we recruit we will recruit the best person for the job; making sure we have the right people, with the right skills and behaviours, able to perform their job well, and in the right way</i>". Mark was concerned at the wording of the sentence and asked if it could be rephrased to reflect that the authorities would continue to do this.</p> <p>The Head of Service agreed to take that point on board and emphasised that the document was still a work in progress and was subject to amendment prior to final adoption.</p> <p>The West Suffolk Workforce Strategy 2014 – 2016 be recommended to Cabinets for formal adoption by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	RECOMMENDED
037	<p><u>JOINT ADOPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE AND JOINT FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY (REPORT NO JSP14/009)</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development explained that Officers were currently working through the Human Resources policies that were in place at both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in order to produce and agree new joint policies for West Suffolk.</p> <p>The Panel was asked to recommend approval of the Joint Flexible Working Policy and the Joint Adoption Policy & Procedure to both authorities Cabinets for formal adoption.</p> <p>Members posed a number of questions on the policies which the HR Officers present responded to.</p> <p>The Joint Flexible Working Policy and the Joint Adoption Policy & Procedure be recommended to Cabinets for formal adoption by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.</p>	RECOMMENDED

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038	<p><u>APPROVAL REQUEST FOR WEST SUFFOLK JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE PANEL – GOING FORWARD BRIEFING NOTE</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development made reference to the briefing note that had been attached to the agenda with regard to this item.</p> <p>The Panel were being requested to agree that where minor changes to joint policies were required due to legislation changes which were statutory and where the Councils had no choice in how it was applied, that the amendments were made to the policy without referral for approval to the Panel.</p> <p>A record of such changes would be kept, with the date of implementation, and the Panel would be advised at their meetings of any amendments that had taken place. Separate communication would also be issued to staff to ensure they were made aware.</p> <p>The Panel supported and endorsed this way forward.</p>	RESOLVED
039	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p><u>Member Development Charter</u></p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development thanked those Elected Members who had been involved in the assessment for the Member Development Charter. She was pleased to announce that Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had been awarded the Charter and were the first in the country to have achieved this as authorities working jointly.</p> <p>This would be widely communicated to staff and Members.</p>	NOTED
040	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>Two proposed dates for the next meeting in December 2014 had been included on the agenda for the Panel's consideration, however, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development suggested that the next meeting take place in January 2015 instead, as the next quarter ended in December; meaning a January meeting would enable the most up to date information to be provided to the Panel.</p> <p>It was agreed that Democratic Services would source a suitable date in January 2015 for the meeting (to take place at West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds) and the Panel would be advised accordingly.</p>	NOTED