

Joint Staff Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in Room 209/210 on the Second Floor, The Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0ER, on 10 July 2023 at 2:30pm

Present:

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair); UNISON Representative Abbey Dunn (Deputy-Chair)

Councillors: Penny di Cara, Nikki Fabry (Substitute), Stephen Gauntlett and Colin Swansborough

Staff side: Linda Farley (Staff Group Representative)

Officers in attendance:

Ray Brickley (Senior Specialist Advisor, Domestic Abuse), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Becky Holloway (Health and Safety Manager), Helen Knight (Head of HR), Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer, Democratic Services) and Elaine Roberts (Committee Officer, Democratic Services)

1 Election of Chair

That Councillor Stephen Holt be elected Chair of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee for the remainder of the 2023/2024 municipal year.

2 Election of Deputy-Chair

That UNISON Representative, Abbey Dunn, be elected as Deputy-Chair of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee for the remainder of the 2023/2024 municipal year.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

4 Apologies for absence/Declaration of substitute members

Apologies for absence were received from Lewes District Councillors Wendy Maples and Chris Collier, Staff Group Representative Hilary Mitchell and Staff Side Representative Joshua Cooper (UNISON).

It was declared that Lewes District Councillor Nikki Fabry would be acting as Substitute for Councillor Collier for the duration of the meeting.

5 Declarations of interest

There were none.

6 Urgent items

There were none.

7 Verbal update from Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development

The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development and Head of HR in respect of various initiatives across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils.

The Head of HR (HHR) highlighted the results of the 2022 Staff Survey and upcoming Staff Wellbeing Day and All-Staff Conference events scheduled for the summer and autumn of 2023, respectively. The HHR further highlighted that in response to the results of the 2022 Staff Survey, HR launched the 'You said, we did!' initiative to assure staff that the feedback received as a result of the Survey was considered and acted upon.

The HHR discussed plans to alternate the Staff Survey and All-Staff Conference each year, with the next All-Staff Conference to be held in November 2023 and the next Staff Survey to be undertaken in 2024. The Chief Executive (CE) noted that Members from both authorities were invited to the All-Staff Conference.

The Chair and CE highlighted positive feedback which had been received from Members regarding the induction programme for newly elected councillors and the intention to hold similar events for local partners as an opportunity to share the pride and work of the authorities with the wider communities.

Further discussions included opportunities for staff to leave comments anonymously during the Staff Surveys and All-Staff Conferences; staff feedback on the cost of living and flexible working arrangements.

Resolved: That the verbal update be noted.

8 Staff Domestic Abuse Policy

The Committee considered the report which informed Members regarding the development of Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils' Staff Domestic Abuse Policy.

The Senior Specialist Advisor, Domestic Abuse (SSA DA), summarised the report, explaining that the Councils were working towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation which would allow for the improvement of the Councils' services and offer the best possible outcomes for those suffering from domestic abuse.

The SSA DA highlighted that the aim of the DAHA Accreditation was to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards including the creation of domestic abuse policies for the Councils' customers and staff. This would also present a framework of guidance and support for Managers in supporting members of staff.

The SSA DA further highlighted that great feedback had been received in relation to the work being done in order to acquire the Accreditation and that the Policy, as set out in Appendix 1, had been sent to UNISON for consideration to ensure that the Policy was accessible and that intersectional experiences were being fully considered, however comments from UNISON were not received in time for the publication of the report.

Abbey Dunn (UNISON) noted that the Policy had been received by UNISON and that the organisation asserted that it was a big push forward and queried how the Policy would be imbedded. The SSA DA explained that 15-20 staff volunteers from across multiple service areas had already expressed interest in volunteering as Staff Domestic Abuse Champions and that further outreach was planned to acquire more staff volunteers across a wider degree of service areas.

The Chief Executive (CE) noted that he was delighted with the work that was being undertaken in regard to the Policy, noting it was a model of clarity and an excellent piece of work.

Further discussions included the possibility of having an informational stand at the All-Staff Conference in November 2023 and the inclusion of information on the Policy as part of the Councils' website automated Chatbot (ELLIS).

Resolved:

- 1) That the report be noted; and
- 2) That the Head of HR be recommended to approve and implement the Staff Domestic Abuse Policy, as set out in Appendix 1.

9 Annual review of the Councils' Health and Safety Policy

The Committee considered the report which sought to ensure compliance with the Councils' statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

The Health and Safety Manager (HSM) summarised the report, highlighting that the current policy had been updated, as set out in Appendix 1, in an effort to ensure that the legal requirement to have a written policy for organisational

arrangements and commitment to health and safety was being upheld by the Councils.

The Chief Executive (CE) welcomed the updates to the Policy, highlighting that it was essential across a wide range of working environments within the Councils and that its primary focus was to support colleagues.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development (DTCOD) echoed comments made by the CE and congratulated the HSM and her team on the great work which they had done in relation to the updated policy.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the HSM and her team for all of the work they were doing.

Resolved:

That the revised Health and Safety Policy as set out in Appendix 1, be approved in its final form by the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leaders of each Council.

10 Exclusion of the public and press

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of items 11, 12, 13 and 14 on the agenda as there was likely to be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11 4th Quarter 2022/23 Accident Statistics

The Committee received a presentation from the Health and Safety Manager (HSM) in respect of key aspects of health and safety matters across Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils.

Discussions included accident trends and available data in relation to reported accidents.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

12 Sickness Absence Quarter 4 2022/23

The Committee received the Officer's report which provided an update regarding the Councils' sickness figures for the period Quarter 4 (1 January to 31 March 2023) and outlined the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.

The Committee thanked the Head of HR for her department's work in relation to sickness figures for the Quarter 4 period.

Resolved:

That the Quarter 4 (1 January to 31 March 2023) sickness figures and the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, be noted.

13 Consideration of matters raised by the employees' side

There were no additional matters raised by the employees' side over and above those which had been recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

14 Consideration of health and safety matters raised by the employees' side

There were no additional health and safety matters raised by the employees' side over and above those which had been recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

15 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee was scheduled to commence at 2:30pm on Wednesday, 13 September 2023, in the Court Room, Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 4UG.

The meeting ended at 3:30pm.

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair)