

## **Joint Staff Advisory Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Court Room, Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG on 10 September 2024 at 10:00am**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Councillor Chris Collier (Chair); Councillor Stephen Holt (Deputy-Chair), Penny di Cara, Stephen Gauntlett and Wendy Maples

**Staff Group Representative:** Linda Farley

**Staff Side Representatives:** Ann Melia (UNISON)

**Officers in attendance:**

Sandra Ash (Health and Safety Advisor), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Helen Knight (Head of Human Resources) and Jennifer Norman (Committee Officer)

**1 Election of Chair**

That Councillor Chris Collier be elected Chair of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

**2 Election of Deputy-Chair**

That Councillor Stephen Holt be elected Deputy-Chair of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

**3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 were submitted and approved, and the Chair was authorised to sign them as an accurate record.

**4 Apologies for absence/Declaration of substitute members**

Apologies had been received from Employees' Side Representatives, Clare Boorman (UNISON) and Jed Murray (UNISON).

**5 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**6 Urgent items**

There were none.

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

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

The DTCOD summarised Eastbourne Borough Council's (EBC's) current financial position and how it impacted frontline services and staff.

The DTCOD noted that increased housing costs, homelessness figures and the rise of local families in need of local and temporary housing as critical issues that were affecting residents. This contributed to increased financial stress on the Council, despite the additional work being undertaken by Members and staff to assist in producing additional savings. She further noted that Members would continue to lobby Central Government for additional financial support.

The DTCOD highlighted that additional information regarding the financial challenges and current financial position would be outlined in a Stability and Growth report to be considered at a future meeting of EBC's Cabinet.

The DTCOD further highlighted that continued communication with staff was essential and that staff were being kept informed through various consultations and briefings.

The Chair and the Deputy-Chair thanked the DTCOD and agreed that staff should be kept up-to-date and made aware of any decisions which were being made, adding that staff morale, stress and sickness should continue to be monitored.

The Chair and Deputy-Chair confirmed their willingness to continue working together on staff related issues on behalf of both Councils, as part of the shared services model while ensuring that the sovereignty of both Councils was upheld.

**Resolved:** That the verbal update by noted.

## **8 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 9, 10, 11 and 12 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.

**9 Accident report Quarter 1 2024/25**

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

The Health and Safety Advisor summarised the report, with discussions including accident trends and available data in relation to reported accidents.

The Committee requested that the Councils rerun their Safer Driving Campaign, whose primary focus was to raise awareness amongst residents around dangerous and anti-social driving near Environment First Waste Operatives. Officers confirmed that they would take this away and report back to Committee with an update.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

**10 Sickness Absence Quarter 1 2024/25**

The Committee received the Officer's report which provided an update regarding the Councils' sickness figures for the period Quarter 1 (1 April to 30 June 2024) and outlined the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.

**Resolved:**

That the Quarter 1 (1 April to 30 June 2024) sickness figures and the way in which the figures were presented for both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council, be noted.

**11 Consideration of matters raised by the Employees' side**

The Employees' Side highlighted concerns it had over the notice period given to members of staff respect of an HR policy. The Employees' side further highlighted a desire to work with Councillors to review the notice period for the HR policy and others, to ensure they aligned with other local authorities.

The Chair confirmed that he and the Deputy-Chair would review the policy with Officers and the Committee.

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

**12 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.

**13 Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Joint Staff Advisory Committee was scheduled to commence at 10:00am on Thursday, 21 November 2024, in Room 209/210 on the Second Floor, The Marine Workshops, Railway Quay, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 0ER.

The meeting ended at 10:32am.

Councillor Chris Collier (Chair)