

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
EMPLOYEES JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minute of meeting of the Employees Joint Consultative Committee, held in the Hay Room, Dewar's Centre, Glover Street, Perth on Thursday 24 November 2016 at 10.00am.

Present: Representing Perth and Kinross Council:

Councillors I Campbell, A Grant, and A Munro; K Robertson (Education & Children's Services) and A Taylor (Housing and Community Care).

Present: Representing Trade Unions:

F Fraser, S Hope, and G Mackie; A Thomas (Unite the Union); G Ramsay and T Todd (UCATT) and H Meldrum (GMB).

In Attendance: K Donaldson (Corporate Human Resources Manager); S Munro, L Morgan, K Ridley, J Somerville (all Corporate and Democratic Services); and C Judge (Organisational Development).

Apologies: Councillor I Miller; L McLaren (Unite the Union); T Maric and M Dickson (UNISON).

G Mackie, Convener, in the Chair

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of the Employees Joint Consultative Committee of 22 September 2016 was submitted and approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Appointment of Joint Secretary (Item 3 refers)

Following the recent retirement of Colin Coupar, Joint Secretary, George Ramsay, UCATT, was nominated as Joint Secretary of the Employees JCC by the Trade Unions. The Consultative Committee agreed this appointment.

(ii) Fair Work Framework (Item 5(i) refers)

The Full Council Summary of the Employee Engagement Survey - September 2016 was tabled at the meeting and the Corporate Human Resources Manager proposed that this paper be discussed together with an update on the Fair Work Framework.

C Judge reported a response rate of 52.2% to the Employee Engagement Survey and the Corporate Human Resources Manager agreed that the response rate was high and workforce agreement levels were very positive. She added that there was, however, no room for complacency.

Trade Union representatives asked what constituted a 'team' and how anonymity could be protected within small teams. An example was also given of employees being asked to elaborate on comments made in the survey by their manager. In response to results relevant to employees coping with their workload, it was suggested that this appeared contrary to the experience of reporting to UNISON.

C Judge referred to the importance of improvement actions arising from the survey; aggregating results of small teams to protect anonymity; adopting a more coaching approach by managers; and that following strategic analysis, results had already been reported to the Chief Executive.

The Convener requested that discussion of the Employee Engagement Survey continue at future meetings.

S Munro provided members with a brief update on the Fair Work Framework. She reported that the focus groups referred to at the last meeting had had taken place in October and November 2016, with 7 groups in total and that 261 employees had responded to the survey. She then referred to three areas to focus on (i) the role of line managers (ii) HR policies and (iii) communication.

S Munro suggested that Trade Union awareness feature in the corporate induction process and the Corporate Human Resources Manager suggested that a joint approach with Trade Unions by the promotion of an Inside News Bulletin also being a good way to raise employee awareness. In terms of the development of the employee induction pack, it was agreed that S Hope would liaise with C Judge.

(iii) Living Wage (Item 7 refers)

The Corporate Human Resources Manager reported that the new Living Wage provision of £8.45 per hour would be addressed in national pay negotiations in April 2017 and was applicable to the Council's directly employed workforce.

(iv) Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) (Item 9 refers)

The Corporate Human Resources Manager reported that the number of applicants for VSS had been confirmed on 17 November 2016 as 96 employees. She noted that the Consultative Committee had been previously advised of the increase in the severance aspect of the scheme and that 26 employees applying on those terms was a significant increase. Senior Management Teams (SMT) would make business case assessments of each of the 96 requests on 6 December 2016 and ultimately the final decision lay with the Council budget decision in February 2017.

In response to a question regarding flexible retirement options, the Corporate Human Resources Manager noted that this process was not necessarily progressed via VSS and that employees could be advised on flexible retirement options after discussion with their line-manager.

4. SAFER RECRUITMENT

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Human Resources Manager (G/16/255) updating the Consultative Committee on the review of the Council's safer recruitment processes and outlining next steps to support the Council in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities in safeguarding citizens from harm.

In response to a question regarding costs associated with additional medical examinations, the Corporate Human Resources Manager reported that this was currently under consideration and added that it was likely that the Council would cover costs. The Corporate Human Resources Manager also noted in response to a question regarding the potential redeployment of an employee reporting changes to fitness to drive, that conditions varied and each case would be considered individually. She added that the main aim was to encourage individual responsibility and as a very large employer, the Council would continue to match skill sets and redeploy where possible. The Convener asked how agency workers would be monitored and the Corporate Human Resources Manager confirmed that the onus would sit with the agency.

Resolved: -

The JCC noted the contents of Report G/16/255.

5 MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE – ENHANCING CAPACITY AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Human Resources Manager (G/16/256) 1. updating the Consultative Committee on the range of measures in place to promote the health and wellbeing of the Council's employees and 2. Providing an update on sickness levels, reasons, and trends at 31 March 2016.

K Ridley briefly spoke to the report and confirmed that maximising attendance was now a regular item on the JCC agenda. The Corporate Human Resources Manager referred to the Council's participation in the 'See Me' (attitudes to mental health in the workplace) survey, to interagency collaboration in this area and to 'keeping the topic live'.

Resolved: -

The JCC noted the contents of Report G/16/256.

6. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(i) Homecare Provision

K Robertson spoke to the Consultative Committee on the reported apparent financial collapse of a local Homecare provider ??? AXIOM and of the impact of potential change on service provision. She confirmed that the Council did not have any contracts in place with this provider and H Meldrum noted that the provider had contingencies in place. The Corporate Human Resources Manager noted that the situation would continue to be monitored from the Council's perspective.

(ii) Flexible Working

The Convener asked for an update on the current position relevant to core hours and flexible working and the Corporate Human Resources Manager referred to flexible hours being as

7.00am-9.00am

10.00am-11.30am and

2.00pm-3.30pm.

She added that there had been a growth in flexible working and that some service areas required rigidly fixed working hours. She confirmed that the Executive Officer Team (EOT) had agreed to a two months' trial to test changes to fixed elements. The Corporate Human Resources Manager agreed that a summary would be submitted to the Consultative Committee and that information would also be available on ERIC in due course.

(iii) UCATT

G Ramsay reported that the Trade Union, UCATT would merge with Unite the Union on 1 January 2017.

(iv) Budget Meeting

The Corporate Human Resources Manager confirmed that full-time trade union officials would be sent dates to meet with EOT as part of a series of dialogue designed to provide the opportunity to look at current financial challenges.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 16 February 2017 at 10.00am.