

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

Minute of meeting of the Employees Joint Consultative Committee, held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 10.00am.

Present: Representing Perth and Kinross Council:

Councillors C Ahern (substituting for M Lyle) H Anderson, R McCall and S McCole (all Perth and Kinross Council); C Guild (on behalf of Executive Director (Housing & Environment) and K Robertson (on behalf of Executive Director (Education and Children Services)).

Present: Representing Trade Unions:

S Hope (UNISON)
D Clarke (on behalf of H Meldrum) (GMB)

In Attendance: P Johnstone, S Devaney, S Munro, S Lawson, D Henderson, C Flynn and K Molley (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Apologies: Councillor M Lyle (Perth and Kinross Council); and L Roberts (UNISON)

S Hope in the Chair

1. APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER AND VICE-CONVENER

S Hope expressed concern at the Trade Unions being put in the position of having to determine the appointment of Convener with only one Trade Union member present. He proposed deferring the decision until the next meeting when there would be more Trade Union members present. S Hope further proposed that he would Chair this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE EMPLOYEES JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF 28 NOVEMBER 2019

The minute of meeting of the Employees Joint Consultative Committee of 27 February 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(i) Employees Joint Consultative Committee Constitution with other Committees (item 10 refers)

C Flynn provided a verbal update on the Employees Joint Consultative Committee Constitution with other Committees. She advised that Committee Services and Human Resources are currently working on a draft constitution and a sample agenda. A meeting of the Short Life Working Group will be arranged in due course to seek members views on these documents.

5. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A short video clip was played to Committee by Gillian Reeves, Organisational Development in her role as Wellbeing Champion on the wellbeing offer available to all employees.

S Munro also provided a verbal update on Health and Wellbeing in relation to the Wellbeing Surveys issued to all employees to ascertain their views on a number of issues. In respect of working from home 47% of respondents said at the time of the initial survey that it felt natural working from home and were content with this change in working environment. Another survey has been sent to all employees to establish if feelings or experiences have improved or changed, this survey was live at the time of the Committee. S Munro added that guidance has been introduced for Managers to enable them to support staff during the pandemic. Development sessions will also be offered virtually to look at different aspects of the survey responses to ensure that we meet the ongoing needs and expectations of our workforce.

6. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

C Guild gave a verbal update on the draft Organisational Development Plan which is due to go to the next Council meeting in October. This plan will incorporate the culture, behaviours, resource building, leadership and collaborative working needed for the implementation of the Perth and Kinross Offer and recovery and renewal. If approved, the plan will be sent for further comment and consideration.

In response to a question from Councillor H Anderson regarding Councillor engagement on the development of the plan, C Guild advised that this would be brought forward to Councillors for their input before going to the Council meeting for consideration in October. C Guild added that an update will be brought to the next EJCC.

7. WORKFORCE UPDATE

S Devaney gave a verbal update on the workforce arrangements introduced across Perth and Kinross Council. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, HR undertook the re-tasking activity to train and resource staff into other areas which are

deemed as critical services. More than 500 employees were tasked into other areas such as educational hubs, social care and burial and crematoriums. Employees have also helped in new activities such as volunteering at foodbanks and driving behind refuse collections. PPE and PVG checks have also been provided appropriately. Around 50 employees are still currently re-tasked in their temporary roles.

S Devaney added that in preparing to support any ongoing response employees are being contacted to see if they would be willing to be re-tasked again if they were urgently needed in another service. So far 62 employees have agreed to be Covid Responders. In response to a question from K Robertson regarding staff already in critical services, S Devaney advised that there is a list of essential services and staff employed in these services will not be asked to re-task.

S Devaney also added that 195 desks are now being accessed by employees in Pullar House. Employees have the chance to request to work in the office to support their wellbeing or for other legal or individual reasons that make working from home challenging. HR have contacted line managers of those making requests due to reduced wellbeing to establish if a return to the office has resulted in an improvement in wellbeing.

S Devaney informed the Committee that the levels of sickness had increased initially due to lockdown measures. In response to a question from S Hope regarding how sickness absences are being recorded, S Devaney confirmed that arrangements to classify absences had been introduced and monitoring was being undertaken on a case by case basis. P Johnstone added that a Covid absence is recorded differently to a sickness absence.

Councillor S McCole emphasised the positive work that had been taken by Human Resources around workforce throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked for future Committees if figures could be produced in reports to give members time to absorb the information.

8. WORKFORCE PLANNING

P Johnstone gave a verbal update on workforce planning. She advised that the current approved workforce plan 2018-2021, is being reviewed in the current context and ability to deliver outcomes set out in the original plan.

P Johnstone advised that Human Resources are currently preparing a new Corporate Workforce plan and discussing with stakeholders what can be done differently going forward in terms of flexible and agile ways of working, increased use of digital and technology for both recovery and renewal as well as ongoing response. Human Resources are developing an Interim Short-term Workforce Plan that will dovetail into the Organisational Development Plan. This plan is based on occupational groups, resourcing, COVID-19 responses and longer-term arrangements needed to support any new ways of working. P Johnstone added that realistic targets will be set that are flexible to manage in the current circumstances.

In response to a question from Councillor R McCall regarding engagement with Elected Members, P Johnstone advised that a forum to discuss the needs and skills of Members will be created.

9. REMOTE WORKING

S Lawson provided a verbal update on remote working. She advised that Interim Guidance was produced in April 2020 through the joint efforts across different Services. Human Resources are now developing a Remote Working Policy which will cover all employees. S Lawson added that engagement from Trade Unions was key to this process. S Hope emphasised UNISON was supportive and suggested looking into ways in which we can get other Trade Unions involved.

In response to a question from Councillor R McCall regarding how information can be kept up to date in a working environment which is constantly changing, P Johnstone emphasised it is important to consider a medium to longer term flexible approach which can be adapted to people's needs at any given time. Working from home was introduced due to the lockdown and a longer-term approach is needed. Refreshed guidance will allow a more considered response to manage working from home. This guidance will include reviewing the support available to all employees especially as winter approaches to assess the impact this will have on mental health and wellbeing. There are already a number of measures in place to support employee and we need to continue to promote these.

P Johnstone advised that an update would be brought back to the EJCC.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

S Hope thanked Human Resources and Education and Children's Services for all their work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. He referred to the work involved in schools reopening and the amount of risk assessments that were undertaken.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26 November 2020 at 10.00am.

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