

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018  
(10.30 AM)**

PRESENT: Councillor S Robinson (Vice-Chair)

**Representing the Council:**

Councillors M Bowen and B Johnson

**Representing the Employees:**

J Percival (UNISON)

**Officers**

A Stokes - Executive Director & Chief Finance Officer

D Owen - Corporate Health & Safety Officer

T Cooper - OD & Transformation Manager

P Trafford - Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Forrester and C R Jebb

**Background Papers to these Minutes are exempt by virtue of the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 - Part 1 of Schedule 12A, Paragraph 1 (Information relating to an individual) or Paragraph 4 (Labour relations matters).**

**Please note: These minutes are subject to approval by Cabinet.**

25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors A. Forrester and C. Jebb. Also from A. Capulet-Buxton and D. Wright.

26 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2018 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**MATTERS ARISING –**

David Owen (DO) advised that, further to Minute No. 16 (1<sup>st</sup> bullet point) relating to Counter-Terrorism training, the training session for members had now taken place and went very well.

27 **ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2017/18**

DGO introduced this, his 10<sup>th</sup> annual report, to members.

Taking the established format, the report showed that a few minor changes had taken place throughout the year. Some support functions had been taken on elsewhere within the Alliance, such as the administration of the Corporate Health & Safety Committee and Emergency Planning Compliance Group. The Display Screen Equipment assessment process was migrating to an 'on-line' process, with self-assessment being the norm and trained assessors only being used by exception, where specifically needed. Managers were being trained to do H&S work, relieving some of the burden for the period whilst DGO was without an assistant.

The ongoing emphasis was on a sensible, risk-based approach, building H&S into our normal way of working rather than regarding it as an 'add-on' to ensure that we get it right and keep it that way. The report reflected a successful year in this field.

When asked what effect the Alliance Environmental Services (AES) transfer had had, DGO confirmed that some existing H&S expertise/experience had gone, but that there would be a re-assessment of how H&S officer time would be spent as a result. There was still an option to call on AES for assistance where necessary.

The Committee thanked DGO for his report.

28 **ELECTRICITY AT WORK 2018 - SP 005**

This revised procedure was brought about by changes introduced by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and applied to the use of electricity, electrical equipment and portable electrical equipment in the workplace and was made under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

The document superceded all other previous documents issued on the same subject and was **APPROVED** by the Corporate Health & Safety Committee on 18 September 2018. The Assets Manager was the 'Designated Person' and Steve Robinson (SR) queried that fact that, as this post was shortly to become vacant, what arrangements were in place to cover? DGO confirmed that Keith Parker was currently overseeing this, with assistance from Peter Chadwick.

29 **MANUAL HANDLING & LIFTING 2018 - SP 010**

DGO confirmed that this policy revision was as a result of changes introduced by HSE, principally to the Push/Pull Risk Assessment.

HSE has served a 'Notice of Contravention' to AES, as the risk assessment related directly to the movement of wheelie bins. A training course was to be provided for the staff involved.

It was noted that no specific reference was made within the policy to spade work. DGO agreed to include wording related to the use of spades.

30 **GUIDANCE TO ELECTED MEMBERS 2018 - SD 7**

The guidance document was confirmed to be on the Members' Portal within the SMDC Intranet and complied with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The key message was that Officers were trained in how to respond in such circumstances and the guidance advised how and when members were to be involved. To this end, DGO confirmed that he would provide a training session for members following the 2019 election, incorporating existing and newly-elected District Councillors.

Cross-Authority 'Mutual Aid' assistance was discussed and assistance would be available from AES, should the need arise.

31 **PERSONAL SAFETY CARD - JULY 2018**

Initially intended to advise members of staff how to stay safe whilst carrying out their duties, the safety card was seen to be applicable to elected members also.

DGO agreed to do a short training session for members.

32 **WORKING NEAR TRAFFIC SAFETY CARD - JULY 2018**

Introduced following a 'near-miss' incident in Tean earlier in 2018, the safety card advised workers of the following points:-

- Be aware of your surroundings;
- Remain alert;
- Obey all road rules; and
- Personal protective wear.

The vehicle fleet was to be updated with 360 degree cameras, which would help in that the images collected would be admissible in court.

33 **SICKNESS REPORT**

Tanya Cooper (TC) presented the report covering the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018. An average of 4.1 days per full time employee (FTE) had been lost to sickness absence, which was on track for the annual target of 9 days per FTE. This equated to a total of 1,585 days compared to 1,983 days for the same period in 2017/18.

The largest contributory cause for sickness absence remained Stress-related Illness, accounting for 38% of the total. Of the 15 cases, 2 were work-related, 10 personal and 3 were a combination of work/personal. These were predominantly long-term cases and had been diagnosed medically. These cases had been supported by referrals to Occupational Health, Counselling, Stress Risk Assessments and temporarily adjusted duties.

34 **RECRUITMENT POLICY**

## **Joint Consultative Committee (SMDC)- 20 November 2018**

The updated recruitment policy was presented to the Committee by Tanya Cooper (TC), having been circulated at the quarterly meeting with the Unions in July 2018.

The policy applied to the recruitment of all permanent, temporary and casual employees within Grades AR2 – AR9. There was a separate agreed procedure for the positions of Chief Executive, Executive Director, Heads of Service and Corporate/Operational Service Managers.

All positions were advertised internally first, moving to external advertisement only when necessary.

One notable change to the policy was the ‘identity check’ and ‘right to work in the UK verification’. These were to be carried out by the Post Office (ID checking service).

SR queried the assessment criteria for interviews, specifically the reference to “The candidate with the highest score most closely matching the person specification should be the successful applicant.” TC confirmed that the word “should” rather than “will” gave the leeway which was sometimes necessary.

Under the “Disclosure and Barring Checks” section, a wording error was identified – “Where a post is not exempt from the (ROA) it is illegal to carry out a DBS check.” The word “not” was to be removed from the sentence.

### **35 QUARTERLY UNION MEETING - MATTERS ARISING**

Following the quarterly meeting with the Unions on 14 November 2018, the following main points were discussed:-

1. Post AES transfer arrangements. Extensive discussions took place, with positive dialogue from all sides;
2. Spinal Column Point (SCP) pay amendments regarding last year’s national pay award settlement. Some lower SCP’s were to disappear, with implications for the staff involved. Human Resources were currently looking at this. Some local authorities had already moved away from SCP’s altogether;
3. Progression Bar on Pay Increments – there were now 13 individual members of staff affected. SR advised that some people were still unhappy with the situation. Andrew Stokes confirmed that this matter was being looked at ‘in the round’.
4. Mental Health work – an area that was becoming less stigmatised. Work was ongoing to assist staff affected.
5. TUPE concerns regarding the transfer of staff to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. Staff concerns had been allayed.

**Joint Consultative Committee (SMDC)- 20 November 2018**

36 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 22 January 2019 at 10.30am.

37 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business raised.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm

\_\_\_\_\_Chair \_\_\_\_\_Date