

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 3.30 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Alastair Moss (Chair)
Florence Keelson-Anfu (Deputy Chair)
Deputy Charles Edward Lord
Philip Woodhouse

Union Representatives:

Ben Campbell-White (GMB)
Diane Timmins (GMB)
Victoria Davies (GMB) – online
Anna Lee (GMB) – online
Margaret Raymond (Unite) – online
Teresa Pugsley (Unite) - online

Officers:

Caroline Al-Beyerty
Alison Littlewood

Pauline Shakespeare
Colette Hawkins
Chris Fagan
Shy'ancco Pitter
John Cater

- The Chamberlain
- Interim Executive Director, HR & Chief People Officer
- HR Department
- HR Department
- HR Department
- HR Department
- Committee Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Randall Anderson, Steve Goodman, and Gregory Lawrence.

Nick West (Unite) issued his apologies.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 28th November 2023 are approved as an accurate record.

Workplace Attendance Policy

At this point, the Chair proposed that the discussion concerning changes to the Corporation's Workplace Attendance Policy (considered at the recent meeting of the Corporate Services Committee) should be moved into the public section of the meeting.

The representatives of both unions expressed thanks to the Chair for reading out their joint submission concerning changes to the Policy at the 21st February meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

Both Unions highlighted the feedback they have received from their Members since the Corporate Services Committee meeting; this included anger at the alleged casual racism and perceived dismissive and condescending language and tone used in some of the remarks made by some of the elected Members during the meeting.

The representative of the GMB stressed that, when it came to the support for uplifting attendance in the workplace, in his view, it was clear there was now a disconnect between decision-makers and those working on the front line for the Corporation – the impact the change in policy would have upon retention and recruitment would, he believed, bear this out in due course.

In addition, the unions expressed their concern that the requirements of Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) had not been given due regard. Specifically, they suggested that no prior engagement had been undertaken and the zero negative implications recorded for those with protected characteristics was inaccurate. Officers responded that the EqIA was a live document, which would be iterated based on the information HR receive as part of the implementation process.

The Chair stressed that he was very sorry that some individuals had been offended by some of the comments made at the meeting of the Corporate Services Committee. It was deeply regrettable that the opening tone of this important subject had been marred in such a way, and he emphasised that this was not the intention; the staff of the City Corporation was its most valuable asset and progress would only be achieved through collective endeavour where everyone was brought along on the journey. He added that the Joint Consultative Committee was an invaluable forum for constructive discussions on this matter.

Officers added that whilst the steer was provided by the Corporate Services Committee in February, a lot of hard work lay ahead to equitably deliver the new policy. A good deal of feedback had already been received and a full plan of engagement with the unions, EDI colleagues, and the staff networks was being finalised.

On behalf of the Disability Enabling Network (DEN), a GMB representative provided a slide presentation on the policy's implications for those employees with a disability/disabilities.

The Chair and HR officers thanked the GMB representative for her very thoughtful and useful presentation, discussions would continue with DEN (and other staff networks and the unions) to ensure the Policy is implemented in an equitable way.

4. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items of urgent business.

6. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

7. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2023 are approved as an accurate record.

8. **ITEMS RAISED JOINTLY BY GMB AND UNITE**

8.1 **Workplace Attendance**

This was discussed in the public section of the meeting.

8.2 **Pay Award**

The Committee discussed the Pay Award for 2024/25.

8.3 **Stress Survey Results (GMB)**

The Committee discussed the submission from GMB concerning results from a survey undertaken concerning stress among Corporation employees.

9. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was one question.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 4.15 pm

Chair

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