

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Staff  
Consultative Group held at Surrey  
Heath House/ Zoom on 2 March 2023**

---

+ Lynn Smith (Chairman)  
+ Cllr Sharon Galliford (Vice Chairman)

- Cllr Rodney Bates	+ Keiran Bartlett
+ Cllr Stuart Black	- Kelly Fidgett
Cllr Tim FitzGerald	+ Joe Fullbrook
+ Cllr Josephine Hawkins	+ Gillian Riding
Cllr Charlotte Morley	+ Anthony Sparks
Cllr Adrian Page	Vacancy
+ Cllr John Skipper	Vacancy

+ Present  
- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Sally Kipping, Julie Simmonds and Rachel Whillis.

**28/J Notes**

The notes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 were agreed.

**29/J Sickness Absence Policy**

The Group considered a revised Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, which had been renamed to the Attendance Policy and Procedure to better focus on attendance rather than medical conditions. A number of changes had been proposed to the Policy which sought to balance the Council's responsibilities in delivering its services with providing support to employees.

**RESOLVED that the Employment Committee be asked to adopt the revised Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report.**

**30/J Data Breaches Policy**

The Group considered proposed revisions to the Data Breaches Policy. It was agreed to defer consideration of the item pending further clarification on why the changes were being proposed at that time and reference to the Article 29 Working Group.

**RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.**

**31/J Information Security Policy**

The Group was advised that this item was still under review and would be deferred to a future meeting.

**32/J Data Protection Policy**

The Group agreed to defer consideration of this item so it could be considered alongside the Data Breaches Policy and the Information Security Policy at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.**

### **33/J Complaints Policies**

The Group considered proposed revisions to the Council's Complaints Policy and its Unreasonable, Persistent and Vexatious Communication and Complaints Policy & Procedure (UPVC).

Arising from discussions on the policies, it was agreed to further consider the following matters:

- Reviewing the requirements for submitting a stage 2 complaint where it had been raised as an appeal/ request for a review of a stage 1 response (Complaints & Compliments policy)
- Clarifying whether the MP needed to be involved in any processes referred to the Ombudsman
- Whether the UPVC policy should be updated to contain a single reference to vexatious; alternatively, ensuring references throughout the policy were consistent

It was agreed that these matters would be considered and the outcome circulated to members of the Group by email prior to submission to the Executive for agreement.

### **34/J Family Friendly Policy**

The Group was informed that the Family Friendly Policy had been subject to a fundamental review and the changes proposed, which improved the terms offered to staff, would bring the Council in line with other employers. The main changes included:

- (i) contractual maternity and adoption pay increases from the statutory requirements currently offered;
- (ii) allowances which may be paid during leave, for example car allowance; and
- (iii) an increase of benefit for Paternity Leave so it was now paid as opposed to unpaid leave.

It was recognised that the changes proposed would have budgetary implications.

The Group considered and supported the changes to the Policy. It was also agreed to add a section on Kinship and Foster Care, along with adding reference to encouraging flexible and agile working for staff with caring responsibilities. A further review would be undertaken at a future meeting to consider whether paid

leave could be introduced for kinship and foster carers. It was also agreed to add a new Carer Policy to the Group's Work Programme.

In addition to those changes, it was agreed to address any inconsistencies in references to paid bereavement leave and add flexibility to elements of the bereavement section, for example in allowing partners or close relatives to make initial contacts.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the Employment Committee be asked to adopt the revised Family Friendly Policy and Procedure, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report; and**
- (ii) a review of the Policy in respect of Kinship and Foster Carers be added to the Work Programme.**

**35/J Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment**

The Group considered proposed changes to Staff Terms and Conditions. The changes principally concerned:

- (i) amendment to the authorisation process for staff wishing to take on another role alongside their Council role,
- (ii) the addition of wording around staff benefits; and
- (iii) the addition of reference to support of Professional Membership fee, which had previously been in the Expenses Policy.

The Group considered the proposed amendments to the process for authorising additional jobs and heard diverging views on whether staff should be required to notify manager or receive approval for a second role, including whether this should be influenced by the member of staff's grade. It was advised that the Council had to be mindful of perceived conflicts of interest or a possible breaches of statutory obligations under the Working Time Directive. The Council also had to be mindful of any potential reputational damage.

Following discussion, it was agreed to amend paragraph 2.5 by replacing 'approved' with 'notify and agreed'. It was also agreed to amend paragraph 2.6 by removing the reference to 'in exceptional circumstances'.

It was noted that payment of a second professional subscription would be considered where it was required for a role and a supporting business case received.

**RESOLVED that the Employment Committee be asked to adopt the revised Staff Terms and Conditions Policy and Procedure, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended.**

**36/J Safeguarding Policy**

The Group considered proposed revisions to the Council's Safeguarding Policy. It was recognised that there was a need to provide clear information on the safeguarding champions.

**RESOLVED that the Employment Committee be asked to adopt the revised Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report.**

### **37/J Work Programme**

The Group considered the draft Work Programme for the 2023/24 municipal year and agreed to make the following amendments:

- The Data Breaches Policy, Information Security Policy and Data Protection Policy to be added to the June 2023 meeting;
- The Organisation Change Policy to move from the June 2023 meeting to the September 2023 meeting
- The Agile Working Policy to move from the September 2023 meeting to November 2023 meeting
- The Family Friendly Policy review to consider Kinship Care to be added to the November 2023 meeting
- A new Carer Policy to be added to the unscheduled section of the Work Programme.

**RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be agreed.**

Chairman