

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Staff
Consultative Group held at Surrey
Heath House on 16 June 2022**

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| + Cllr Rodney Bates | + Keiran Bartlett |
| + Cllr Stuart Black | + Nick Clifton |
| Cllr Tim FitzGerald | + Andrew Edmeads |
| + Cllr Sharon Galliford | - Joe Fullbrook |
| + Cllr Josephine Hawkins | Gillian Riding |
| + Cllr Charlotte Morley | - Lynn Smith |
| Cllr Adrian Page | + Anthony Sparks |
| + Cllr John Skipper | + Karen Wetherell |

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Louise Livingston, Julie Simmonds and Rachel Whillis.

1/J Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

It was proposed, seconded, and

RESOLVED that

- (i) Lynn Smith be elected Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Group for the 2022/23 municipal year; and**
- (ii) Councillor Sharon Galliford be elected Vice-Chairman of the Joint Staff Consultative Group for the 2022/23 municipal year.**

It was noted that, as Lynn Smith was not present at the meeting, Councillor Sharon Galliford would chair the meeting.

COUNCILLOR GALLIFORD IN THE CHAIR

2/J Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 29 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3/J Electric Vehicle as a Salary Sacrifice Scheme

The Group considered a report detailing a proposal for the Council to introduce a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to purchase Electric Vehicles. Octopus Electric Dreams had been suggested as the best scheme.

Arising from discussions on the proposal, it was agreed that clarification would be sought on whether an individual's pension contributions would be affected by entering in the scheme. Further detail would be added to make sure staff were aware from the outset of any risks of joining the scheme and what would happen in the event their contract was terminated.

It was advised that the Climate Change Officer was reviewing the necessary infrastructure for EV charging within the Council's car parks and the Surrey Heath House Car Park would be included in this review.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee be advised to agree that the Council signs up to the Octopus Electric Dreams Car Scheme, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report.

4/J Post Entry Training Policy

The Group considered revised Post Entry Training Policy. Arising from the discussions on the Policy, the following amendments were proposed:

- (i) an additional statement would be added providing greater clarity regarding time off for study, for example in relation to the completion of coursework; and
- (ii) more specific detail would be added to Section 5 to ensure that it was clear that an employee leaving the Council's service through no fault of their own would not be expected to repay the costs of their training.

It was agreed that the proposed wording would be circulated to members of the Group for comment prior to the Employment Committee considering this item.

RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of additional wording to be circulated by email, the Employment Committee be advised to agree the updated Post Entry Training Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report.

5/J Updated Pay Settlement Procedure

The Group was reminded that, during the process for agreeing the pay award for 2022/23, it had been agreed that the Pay Settlement Procedure would be reviewed to ensure that all parties was clear about the role they undertook, the information that would be provided, the consultation process that would be used, and the timelines.

A revised Pay Settlement Procedure had been produced which incorporated the following factors:

- Agreeing a pay settlement for a two year period rather than one year, taking into consideration the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Starting the process earlier so it coincide with the budget setting and the process was afforded more time;
- Setting out the role undertaken by each party; and
- Where an agreement had not been reached by the Consultative Group and both sides' recommendations were consequently submitted to the Employment Committee, Staff Representatives would attend this meeting.

In relation to the proposal to agree a settlement for a two-year period, it was clarified that, although there could be circumstances where the decision was revisited, this would only be in response to very specific circumstances and on the advice of the Section 151 Officer.

The nominated group of councillors for the provisional consultation referred to in the third of the consultation section was discussed and the principle for this group to comprise a cross-party selection of councillors from the Employment Committee and JSCG was endorsed. The Head of HR, Performance & Communications undertook to consult with Democratic Services on optimum numbers for this group and thereafter circulate the proposals.

It was also clarified that, in the event that a new pay award option arose from discussions at an Employment Committee meeting, this would not be agreed at that time but referred to Joint Staff for consideration.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Employment Committee be advised to agree the amended Pay Settlement Procedure, as set out in Annex A to the agenda report; and**
- (ii) the Head of HR, Performance & Communications be asked to circulate the proposed make up of the nominated group of councillors to be included in the provisional consultation.**

6/J Christmas Closure

The Group was informed that, for a number of years, the Council had closed for the period between Christmas and New Year. This had been facilitated by a combination of a contractual day's leave and the awarding of a further additional day's leave, which had been matched by staff taking a day's leave from their annual leave entitlement. At its meeting on 8 February 2022, the Employment Committee had agreed to retain the current practice for 2022/23, but had also agreed to consider more permanent arrangements for 2023 onwards at a later meeting in 2022.

The decision comprised two elements, namely whether Surrey Heath House remained open to the public for the three days between the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays and any consequential arrangements for staff leave during this period. Several options had been presented and it was reported that the Member Representatives favoured the option for the Council Offices to be closed on the designated Bank Holidays, plus the additional day granted in accordance with Terms and Conditions, but to open on the remaining two days; however, Staff Representatives favoured the option to continue the practice from recent years.

The Group discussed whether there was a business case for the change, taking into account that closing the offices was not considered to have affected productivity, whilst also recognising any potential public perception associated with this decision. It was also noted that, when the current practice had been introduced, the building had been able to shut entirely, with consequent savings in

utility costs; however, with partner organisations now operating in the building during the Christmas period this benefit had been reduced.

Arising from the discussions, it was agreed there was a need to establish the following factors in order to make an informed decision:

- whether there was any appetite amongst staff to work over the Christmas period;
- information from other Surrey authorities on their arrangements for this period;
- an indication of the level of staffing required, should the offices be opened between Christmas and New Year;
- an indication of the hours the offices would be expected to have staff cover, should they be opened between Christmas and New Year;
- the number of enquiries received by councillors during previous Christmas closures.

It was therefore agreed to defer consideration of the item to the next meeting in order to obtain the requested information.

RESOLVED that consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting.

7/J Pay Policy Statement

The Group received a report setting out the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23. It was reported that the Council was required, in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011, to review and update its Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis.

It was noted that when the Employment Committee considered this item, the Pay Policy Statement would include the Salary Scales for Officers.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee be advised to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2022/23, as set out at Annex A of the report.

8/J Work Programme

The Group received a report setting out its draft work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

It was noted that, if the Employment Committee agreed to adopt the revised Pay Settlement Procedure, an item on the 2023/24 Pay Settlement would be considered at the September meeting. It was also agreed to add an update on Christmas Closure to the next meeting's agenda.

RESOLVED that the work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be approved.

Chairman