

CHAPTER 2 – 11 - JOINT STAFF WORKING GROUP

Functions and Procedure Rules

The Joint Staff Working Group provides a forum for discussion, consultation and negotiation between Elected Members, senior managers and representatives of the Council's recognised trade unions (UNISON and GMB) on employment relations matters, working arrangements, training and development, welfare and terms and conditions of employment.

Joint Staff Working Group will conduct its business in a spirit of openness and cooperation. Its principal role will be to seek to reach agreement based on the belief that sound employment relations are key to the aims and objectives of the Council.

The Group is not a decision making body.

1.0 Functions of the Joint Staff Working Group

- 1.1 To establish regular methods of consultation and dialogue between Melton Borough Council and its employees in order to prevent differences and to adjust them should they arise; always provided that no question of individual discipline, promotion, demotion and redundancy or efficiency should be within the scope of the Group.
- 1.2 Operational matters which are for management to decide but which management should explain to employees with the objective of affording them the opportunity of seeking views and encouraging a sense of personal involvement (e.g. organisation and reorganisation and provision of equipment and use).
- 1.3 Consultation on current and probable business developments
- 1.4 Restructuring of significant employment structures.
- 1.5 Decisions likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or contractual relationships, including collective redundancies or business transfers.
- 1.6 Consultation on the content and conduct of local training programmes, procedure for selection and promotion, physical and social amenities, formulation and application of disciplinary rules and other people management policies.
- 1.7 Negotiation on local terms and conditions of employment not reserved to the national, agreed local procedures, provincial, application of National and Provincial agreements and grievance procedure.

2.0 Joint Staff Working Group Procedure Rules

2.1 Composition of the Committee

The Group shall comprise thirteen members in total consisting of

- Employees Side; 3 UNISON representatives, 1 GMB representative
- Employers Side 7 Councillors and 2 Officers. .

The Working Group will be politically balanced.

2.2 Members may be substituted from the side that they represent.

2.3 Quorum

The quorum for the Committee shall be four members which must be maintained for the duration of the meeting and must consist of 2 Members and 2 Union Representatives.

2.4 Who shall Chair the Meeting?

A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed at the first meeting in each municipal year. Where the Chair is an Employer's Side representative, the Vice-Chair for that year shall be an Employees' Side representative, and vice versa. Unless otherwise agreed, the Chair and Vice-Chair will alternate between Employer's and Employees' Sides each year.

In the event of a casual vacancy, the position will be filled by nomination from the appropriate side at the next ordinary meeting.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside. In the absence of both, the side that nominated the Chair shall nominate a member of the Group to preside for the remainder of that meeting.

The Monitoring Officer shall act as Secretary to the Group and shall be responsible for the compilation and circulation of agendas and minutes.

The Employees' Side shall nominate a person who would normally attend meetings of the Group (either as a member or as an adviser) to liaise with the Secretary to the Group and the Employer's Side, as appropriate.

2.5 Attendance

Each side of the Joint Staff Working Group shall be entitled to have advisers in attendance (including members of the Cabinet, Officers of the Council and full-time trade union officers).

The advisers may speak upon any item, but not vote on it.

No person other than Joint Staff Working Group members, Cabinet Members, advisers or people whom the Group has agreed, shall be permitted to attend meetings.

2.6 Date and Time of Meetings

Meetings shall be held in accordance with the Annual Calendar or Meetings.

Subject to their joint agreement, the Chair and Vice-Chair may alter the date and/or time of any meeting and notify the Secretary as appropriate.

Agenda items shall be submitted to the Secretary not later than 14 days prior to the date of the meeting.

If the Chair and Vice-Chair agree that there is insufficient business to justify the holding of a meeting, it may be cancelled and any items adjourned to the next meeting

An extraordinary meeting shall be held either if agreement to hold such a meeting is reached within the Group or if a formal written request to that effect is submitted to the Secretary, specifying the proposed business and the reason for urgency. Where such a request is received and the Chair and Vice Chair are satisfied that the business falls within the terms of reference of the Group, the Secretary shall call a meeting within 21 days

Separate meetings of the Employers' side and of the Employees' side may take place immediately prior to the meeting and facilities for this purpose shall be provide at the venue.

2.7 Time off for Meetings

Time off with pay shall be granted in accordance with the Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

2.8 Notice of Meeting

The Secretary shall send to every member of the Group and to nominated advisers, at the earliest practicable date, notice of the meeting, agenda and accompanying reports. This shall not be later than 10 clear days prior to the meeting. The Secretary shall also ensure that copies of the agenda and reports are published on the Intranet and on staff notice boards as appropriate.

Items raised at the meeting under 'any other business' shall not normally be permitted unless the Chair and Vice Chair agree that there is an urgent need and that the lack of formal notice is justified

2.9 Procedure

No business shall be considered at any meeting of the Group other than business set out in the Notice of Meeting and any other business which is urgent and which the Chair and Vice-Chair agree should be considered.

Recommendations or decisions of the Group shall be reached only by a majority of each of the two sides voting separately.

Except as the Group may otherwise agree, the procedure of meetings shall be in the hands of the Chair, who will follow the usual rules of fair debate.

2.10 Minutes of meetings

Minutes shall be drafted by Democratic Services who shall ensure that a copy of draft minutes is sent not later than 14 days after the date of the meeting, for comment as to their accuracy.

After taking into account any comments received, Democratic Services shall prepare a final draft and issue this to all members of the Group. The Secretary shall also ensure that the minutes are submitted to the next meeting of the

Cabinet for scrutiny and that copies are placed on the intranet and staff notice boards as appropriate.

At its next meeting, the Group shall consider the accuracy of the minutes and, if it is satisfied that they are an accurate record, the Chair shall sign them.

The minutes shall contain a record of agreements reached and any points upon which agreement was not reached. They shall contain no detail of debate

2.11 Unresolved Issues

If the Group cannot reach agreement on a particular issue, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate administrative Officers to try and resolve the matter. In the event of a continuing failure to agree, appropriate matters may thereafter be referred by either side to the provincial joint secretaries.

Both sides accept that these Functions and Procedure Rules imply an agreement between employer and employees which is binding in honour only and agree to use their best endeavours to ensure that the spirit and intention thereof is honoured at all times.

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