

**Minutes of a meeting of the  
Joint Staff Committee  
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

**The Council Chamber, Worthing Town Hall**

**29 September 2021**

Councillor Karen Harman (Chairman)

<b>Worthing Borough Council:</b>	<b>Adur District Council:</b>
Councillor Daniel Humphreys	Councillor Brian Boggis
Councillor Rosey Whorlow	Councillor Jim Funnell
	Councillor Robina Baine

\*Absent

**JStC/1/21-22            Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

**JStC/2/21-22            Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Joint Staff Committee meeting held on the 4 February 2021, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**JStC/3/21-22            Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest by those present.

**JStC/4/21-22            Public Question Time**

No questions had been submitted in advance.

**JStC/5/21-22            Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

**JStC/6/21-22            Family Friendly Policies**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 6.

The report sought approval for four policies i.e. the Adoption Policy, Maternity Policy, Shared Parental Leave Policy and the Family Friendly Policy (which included Paternity Leave, Parental Leave and Childcare Subsidy) with immediate effect.

The Head of Human Resources (H of HR) advised that should the Policies be approved they would replace the corresponding old Adur & Worthing Councils' Leave Policy. It

was felt the creation of these Policies would make it easier and clearer for staff to find details on the different types of leave.

The Officer read out the recommendation within the report.

Two Members raised queries with the Officer for clarification.

One Member referred the Officer to 3.18 and 3.23 of the proposed Adoption Policy and felt there was also a Bereavement Leave Policy. He questioned which Policy would be relevant and if both, could they be cross-referenced. The Officer confirmed there was a Bereavement Leave Policy where a Director can decide to allow up to 3 months leave, not only for the death of the child and would be dependent on the circumstances. She agreed it would be appropriate to cross reference.

Another Member raised a query with the Officer on the presentation. He queried that should an employee state they intended to return to work but then made the decision not to at the end of the period, what sanctions would be applied.

The Officer advised that she believed that should they not return to work then the occupational amount would be paid, not the statutory amount. However, advised she would gain clarity on this point.

## **Decision**

The Joint Staff Committee unanimously **APPROVED** the four policies with immediate effect and agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources (in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal Services, where relevant) in order to make minor and non-consequential amendments to this policy at any time.

## **JStC/7/21-22            Blended Working Policy**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 7.

The report sought approval of the Blended Working Policy with effect from 1st November 2021.

The H of HR advised the Committee that the Policy had transpired due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the way staff would work in the future. If the Policy was approved it would replace the current Ways of Working Policy. The aim was to enable staff to voluntarily work a proportion of their working hours from home where their role was deemed suitable by their Line Manager. The Officer advised that the new Blended Working Policy and Staff Travel Policy would not take effect until 1 November 2021 in order to implement training with Managers.

The Officer further advised that there were connections between the Blended Working Policy, the Expenses Policy and the Staff Travel and there would be links for ease of reference.

The Officer read out the recommendation within the report.

A Member commended Officers on a forward thinking piece of work and felt it would benefit staff and Worthing residents alike.

Another Member raised concerns about the principle of the Policy as he felt there could be pitfalls for the future. He explained that if you had two members of staff on a similar salary and one was permitted to work from home but the other was not, there would obviously be costs involved for the employee coming into the office that were not incurred by the staff member working from home. He felt that if all staff worked remotely the employer could be saving significant amounts of money. He asked whether the Officer had any comment on his views.

The Officer referred the Member to the Equality Impact Assessment and advised there were a number of roles that could not be carried out at home and the assessment was on the role rather than the individual. However, the Councils would try to ensure that all staff were treated fairly.

Another Member presented the scenario that should you have three individuals working in the office and one of the team working from home, could this arrangement be altered or carried out on a rota basis.

The Officer advised it would be the responsibility of the Manager of the team to ensure fairness within the team. They may need to advise an individual could not work from home when there was cover in the office required. She advised there were a number of staff who preferred working in the office and the Manager's main concern would be the service provided.

Finally, a Member stated she felt it was a good Policy, very well thought through and the research was to be commended. She said that flexible working/blended working was the way many workplaces would be moving.

## **Decision**

The Joint Staff Committee unanimously **APPROVED** the Blended Working Policy with effect from 1 November 2021 and agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources (in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal Services, where relevant) in order to make minor and non-consequential amendments to this policy at any time.

### **JStC/8/21-22            Staff Expenses Policy**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 8.

The report sought approval of the updated Staff Expenses and Reimbursements Policy and Procedure with immediate effect.

The Officer advised the main change to the Policy was that the mileage rates were included for clarity.

Members raised no queries on the presentation for clarification and agreed to accept the Officer's recommendation.

### **Decision**

The Joint Staff Committee **APPROVED** the updated Staff Expenses and Reimbursements Policy and Procedure with immediate effect and agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources (in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal Services, where relevant) in order to make minor and non-consequential amendments to the Policy at any time.

### **JStC/9/21-22            Staff Travel Policy**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 9.

The report sought approval of the Staff Travel Policy with effect from 1 November 2021.

The Officer advised it was an updated Policy to work alongside the Blended Working Policy and to bring it in line with the sustainability agenda for the Councils.

Members raised no queries on the presentation for clarification and agreed to accept the Officer's recommendation.

### **Decision**

The Joint Staff Committee unanimously **APPROVED** the Staff Travel Policy with effect from 1 November 2021 and agreed to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources (in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal Services, where relevant) in order to make minor and non-consequential amendments to this policy at any time.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 6.55 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

### **Chairman**