

Minutes of meeting of the JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (EMPLOYERS') held on MONDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2021 at 11.25 am

Present: Employers' Side

Councillor Middleton (Chair)
Councillors Bowyer, Carr (Vice-Chair), Darlington, Miles and Trendall (substitute for Councillor Alexander)

Officers: S Richardson (Director - Finance and Resources), M Zaman (Head of HR), C Stanton (Pay and Reward Manager) and J Crighton (Committee Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Alexander and Hosking (Vice-Chair)

JNC(E)09 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (Employers') held on 5 October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

JNC(E)10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None disclosed.

JNC(E)11 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2020

The Committee considered the outcome from the Joint Negotiating Committee, held prior to this meeting, which had considered a report on the Smarter Working proposals.

RESOLVED -

That the following decisions of the Joint Negotiating Committee be ratified:

1. That staff roles be categorised as either site based, or home based.
2. That working from home be deemed optional and employees be given the choice to work from home or remain site based, should their home environment or personal circumstances mean homeworking is not appropriate.

3. That necessary changes be made to the Terms and Conditions of employment, including a homeworking contract variation.
4. That the introduction of a 'How I Work Policy' and a 'Supporting New Employees Policy' and amendments to the 'Flexible Workplace Policy' and 'Business Expenses Guidance', be approved.
5. That the changes to the Personal Time Policy, previously Flexitime, be approved and the Terms and Conditions Handbook and contract of employment be amended.
6. That the withdrawal of the Probation Guidance be approved, and the Terms and Conditions Handbook and contract of employment be amended.
7. That the necessary IT equipment be provided to enable employees to work from home.
8. That staff who are designated as home workers be required to come into the office one day per week, when this can be facilitated, to enable them to catch up with colleagues, undertake training, network, etc. as this would help ensure team cohesion, promote wellbeing and prevent isolation. It was noted that this was unlikely to happen until March 2022 due to Covid restrictions.
9. That office space be used differently and, as a result, property rationalisation be enhanced, so reducing costs .
10. That it be recognised that the proposals help increase the pool of potential candidates from which to recruit, as in many cases roles could be undertaken from home.
11. That a six-month stocktake be undertaken of the Smarter Working proposals, in particular:
 - (a) the number of staff that are site based and home based following the issuing of variations to contract;
 - (b) revised building plans based on national pandemic guidance (lifting of restrictions) and how this has impacted on full implementation of the smarter working proposals;
 - (c) how the Council is continuing to promote employee health and wellbeing;
 - (d) any impacts on linked service delivery; and
 - (e) any issues raised by the Trade Unions.

12. That a further review be undertaken in 12 months' time:

That a further stocktake be undertaken on some of the Smarter Working proposals, in particular:

- (a) an update on numbers of site based and home based employees and how roles that undertake a high number of external visits have adapted to the changes;
- (b) details on how the buildings are operating, taking into consideration any national guidance in place at the time;
- (c) any noticeable impact on employee retention and relations;
- (d) any new NJC guidance made in relation to site or home-based working following the NJC Conditions Claim for 2021/22 and any changes in the Council's approach;
- (e) any linked service delivery impacts; and
- (f) a reflection on how amended polices are working.

JNC(E)12

ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee considered a report on the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

The Committee noted that the Annual Pay Policy Statement highlighted the ratios between the highest and lowest salaries paid by the Council as well as the mean and median salaries. Benchmarking data compared the salaries paid by the Council to those paid by other local authorities, along with different employment approaches relating to staff and pay structures.

RESOLVED -

That the Pay Policy Statement be recommended to Council for adoption at its meeting on 10 March 2021, with effect from 1 April 2021.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.55 AM