

Report to Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 27 November 2014

Portfolio: Technology and Support Services

Subject: Review of the Terms of Reference - Joint Consultative Committee

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Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992564607)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) The Panel recommends to Council the proposed amended Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultative Committee, subject to any comments or amendments.

Report:

Background

1. Following a report to Management Board in December 2012 'Existing Arrangements for Employee Engagement', by the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) it was acknowledged that the Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) had not been reviewed for a considerable period of time. Management Board agreed that a review of the JCC should take place.
2. In local government it is usual to have a forum whereby the Council formally discusses issues with the recognised trade unions in line with the representation at a regional level. In the Council's case this relates to the East of England Local Government Association Regional Council.
3. The JCC is the Council's forum whereby these discussions take place between the trade unions and the members. The Committee is consulted with, informed about and has discussions on a range of employee matters. However, employment matters concerning an individual are not within the scope of the Committee.

Representation

4. One of the main issues identified within the PIU report was the perception that non-union members were not represented by the attendees at the JCC. Whilst this is technically correct as the trade unions are not required to represent non trade union members, it is worth noting that;
 - the trade union representatives who attend the Committee have to be employees of the Council;
 - there are 9 trade union representatives from a range of service areas who between them are likely to hold a range of views similar to employees who are not trade union representatives; and
 - all representatives whether staff or member representatives are permitted to share their views with the Committee and do so.

5. Other work is progressing outside the review of the JCC Terms of Reference, regarding internal staff communications. There will be an opportunity to consider staff participation in a range of policy development areas or Council initiatives across the Council which may not relate to employment matters.

6. The Council has been successful in appointing a graduate under the National Graduate Development Programme and the Council's Management Board has agreed that they carry out a review of staff communications/engagement. As part of the review they will draft and develop an Employee Engagement Strategy. This will include the issues raised in the PIU report.

7. Currently, the Lead Officer (currently the Assistant Director (HR)) for the JCC is in a position to be able to take forward the views of employees, (either trade union members or non-members) and present them to the Committee. In addition, there has been a specific responsibility added to the Terms of Reference for them to inform staff of the outcome of the Committee meetings via District Lines (or other staff newsletter).

8. Members may wish to note that staff do have access to the JCC agenda in advance of the meeting through the 'modern gov.' system. If staff wish to comment on any issue raised they can do so through their line manager or the Lead Officer for the Committee.

Process

9. As the Committee is not a public meeting the rules regarding notice periods for meetings and any other business do not apply. However, the proposed Terms are consistent with the Council's usual processes and give at least 5 working days' notice of a meeting. As long as any item for any other business is agreed by all the parties, it can be accepted.

Joint Consultative Committee

10. This report was submitted to the JCC at its meeting in July 2014 who agreed to recommend the proposed amendments. The proposed Terms of Reference for the JCC are at Appendix 1.

Reason for decision:

Following a report to Management Board in December 2012 'Existing Arrangements for Employee Engagement', it was acknowledged that the Terms of Reference for the JCC had not been reviewed for a considerable period of time. Management Board agreed that a review of the JCC should take place.

Options considered and rejected:

The current Terms of Reference could be retained, however, they have become dated and do not include the correct information regarding current processes.

Consultation undertaken:

The Joint Consultative Committee was consulted at its meeting in July 2014.

Resource implications:

There are no resource implications.