

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in the Council Chamber, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Tuesday, 12 March 2020 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Karen Conaghan, Jim Finn, Daniel Lennie, Jonathan McColl and Iain McLaren; James Halfpenny (EIS); Derek Hutchison and John Wagner (GMB); Claire Mackenzie (SSTA); Sean Davenport, Val Jennings, Susan Shannon and David Smith (UNISON); and Chris Rossi and Margaret Wood (Unite).

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Victoria Rogers, Strategic Lead – People & Technology; Gail MacFarlane, Strategic Lead – Roads & Transportation; Jo Gibson, Head of Health & Community Care; Stephen Daly, Citizen & Digital Manager; Patricia Kerr, Manager of ICT; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer – Pupil Support; Jen Watt, Civil Contingencies Officer; Louise Hastings, HR Business Partner; Raymond Lynch, Senior Solicitor; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors David McBride and John Millar; Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities; Jim McAloon, Strategic Lead – Regeneration; Stephen West, Strategic Lead – Resources; and Alison McBride, Strategic People & Change Manager.

Mr David Smith in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 5 December 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the undernoted paragraph being inserted in the item under the heading 'Trades Unions Issues – VE Day/May Day':-

- “(3) to note the view expressed by Mr Halfpenny that at the meeting of the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers held on 18 June 2019 the teachers’ unions had only agreed to note the academic calendar for 2019/20 which reflected that the bank holiday would be moved to Friday, 8 May 2020 to coincide with VE Day but that they did not support this change.”

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Having heard Mr Smith, Chair, the Forum agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

TRADES UNIONS ISSUES

Lack of Consultation on Shared Services for Fleet and Waste (item requested by GMB)

The Forum heard from Mr Wagner who expressed concern at the lack of updates or consultation in relation to Shared Services for Fleet and Waste.

In response, the Strategic Lead – Roads & Transportation stated:-

- (a) that a trades unions briefing had taken place in August 2019 in advance of a report being submitted to Council in relation to this matter and that a further meeting had taken place in December 2019 to discuss a shared management model for Fleet and Waste;
- (b) that it had been intended that a joint trades unions event would have taken place in January 2020, in advance of a report being submitted to the Council meeting on 4 March 2020, but that the trades unions had been unable to attend; and
- (c) that at the aforementioned Council meeting it had been agreed that a Shared Fleet and Waste Manager post would be created.

Following discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead in answer to Members’ questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note the update which had been provided;
- (2) to note the trades unions’ concerns in relation to the sharing of services and their now stated opposition to the sharing of any managers with other Councils;
- (3) to note that it was intended that more consultation events would take place with the trades unions, in addition to discussions at the appropriate joint consultative committee; and

- (4) to note that the post-holder of the new Shared Fleet and Waste Manager post would be employed by West Dunbartonshire Council.

ICT IMPROVEMENT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – People & Technology providing an update on ICT changes and improvements over the last 24 months.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of ICT in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

WORKING DAYS LOST DUE TO WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS/ INJURIES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held on 5 December 2019, when concern had been noted at the increase in the number of working days lost due to work-related accidents/injuries in the period April to September 2019 in comparison to the same period in the previous year, from 280.93 days to 633.56 days, the HR Business Partner provided further information in a verbal update.

In so doing, she advised the Forum:-

- (a) that expressed as a percentage of total sickness absence there had been an increase of approximately 1% in the absence attributed to work-related accidents/injuries between the two periods, rising to 1.9% of the total;
- (b) that the absences reported in this category for the period April to September 2019 were attributed to 24 employees, four of whom were on long-term absences which accounted for approximately 534 of the 633 working days lost (84%);
- (c) that four of the long-term absence cases were in Community Health & Care, with Child Healthcare & Criminal Justice, Housing & Employability, and Environment & Neighbourhood each having one long-term case, and that the reasons for the absences included musculoskeletal (MSK) injuries, falls and injured wrists and fingers;
- (d) that the causes of the accidents were predominately slips, trips and falls (10 of the 24 cases) and were spread out across the services and so no clear trend could be determined for any particular service, with there being a variety of categories for the other cases including cuts, MSK injuries and soft tissue damage; and
- (e) that Community Health & Care had the largest number of cases (seven of 24) but that it should be borne in mind that this was one of the largest employee groups, with the remainder of the cases spread across a number of services.

The Forum agreed to note the update which had been provided.

TRANSFORMATION OF ONE STOP SHOPS AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The Citizen & Digital Manager provided a verbal update in respect of the consultation relating to the transformation of One Stop Shops and Library Services.

In so doing, he advised the Forum:-

- (a) that initial consultation meetings with employees had now been completed and very positive feedback had been received on the process;
- (b) that a list of Frequently Asked Questions had been provided to all employees in libraries and One Stop Shops;
- (c) that a new job profile had been drafted and would be shared with employees for feedback over the next two weeks, it being anticipated that the outcome of an evaluation would be shared with the staff group by the end of April 2020;
- (d) that training plans were being finalised and would be rolled out throughout April 2020;
- (e) that CCTV provision for libraries was being progressed through Asset Management and that it had been requested that systems be installed in time for the project going live;
- (f) that there were concerns at the condition of Clydebank Library due to water ingress which would be require to be rectified by 1 May 2020; and
- (g) that a Clydebank Town Centre Office (CTCO) Operations Group had been established to address the future uses of the office.

Following discussion and having heard the Citizen & Digital Manager and relevant officers in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note the concerns expressed in relation to work having to be done to rectify water ingress at Clydebank Library so soon after its refurbishment;
- (2) that it may be helpful for the Forum to be given an explanation of how the Council determines what period of guarantee should apply to contracts involving building works; and
- (3) otherwise to note the update which had been provided.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS – COVID-19

Mr Smith, Chair, invited the Strategic Lead – People & Technology to provide an update in relation to the Council's planning for the COVID-19 outbreak.

Having heard the Strategic Lead, the Forum noted:-

- (a) that the outbreak had now been classed as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation and that it was anticipated that nationally decisions would soon be taken to move from measures to contain the virus to measures to delay its spread;
- (b) that the Council was following Scottish Government, Health Protection Scotland and NHS Inform guidance in terms of emphasizing the importance of regular hand-washing for 20 seconds and good respiratory hygiene, particularly in educational establishments, and workforce briefings would continue to be issued and information shared with trades unions conveners;
- (c) that the Council's Strategic and Operational Resilience Teams had been stood up, had met on two occasions and would now be meeting on a weekly basis (or as required), and that the Health & Social Care Partnership's Local Resilience Management Team had similarly been stood up;
- (d) that ICT was readying itself to facilitate remote/home-working and that it was anticipated that advice to employees in this regard would be issued shortly; and
- (e) that the allocation of additional resources to critical/key roles and essential services in the Council was being assessed.

Following discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead and relevant officers in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note that the current advice from Environmental Health on cleaning remained the same (the weekly cleaning of office buildings with schools requiring to be cleaned on alternate days and nurseries daily) but would be kept under review;
- (2) to note the present difficulties in procuring hand sanitizer but that the advice was that proper handwashing was the best way of removing bacteria from hands;
- (3) to note that consideration was being given to the continued use of biometric readers at the entrances to and within the Church Street office in Dumbarton but that robust security remained a key objective;
- (4) to note the concerns expressed by Mr Halfpenny in relation to a possible increase in non-contact time resulting from setting up Google Classroom lessons and that advice was expected to be issued by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) in this regard shortly; and
- (5) otherwise to note the position in respect of the Council's readiness.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.