

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in the Council Chamber, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Thursday, 14 March 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson and Jonathan McColl; James Halfpenny* (EIS); Allan Kane (GMB); Claire Mackenzie (SSTA); Sean Davenport, Val Jennings and David Smith (UNISON); and Richard O'Malley (Unite).

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Angela Wilson, Strategic Director - Transformation & Public Service Reform; Richard Cairns, Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth; Victoria Rogers, Strategic Lead - People and Technology; Julie Lusk, Head of Mental Health, Addictions and Learning Disability; Alison McBride, Organisational Development & Change Manager; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer, Pupil Support; Raymond Lynch, Senior Solicitor; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Finn and David McBride; David Scott and John Wagner (GMB); Simon Macfarlane (UNISON); Margaret Wood (Unite); Stephen West, Strategic Lead - Resources; and Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead - Communications, Culture & Communities.

Councillor Jonathan McColl 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 6 December 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

ASSESSMENT OF VACANT/OBSOLETE POSTS AND IMPACT ON SICKNESS ABSENCE AND WORK RELATED STRESS (QUARTER 3 2018/2019)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - People and Technology:-

- (a) providing a detailed analysis on the vacant and/or obsolete posts within Strategic Lead areas and establishing whether there is a clear link between these and the reported levels of sickness absence attributed to mental health absences and work related stress; and
- (b) examining the absence information from October to December 2018 and giving consideration to establishment changes processed through the workforce management system (WMS) since April 2017.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead and relevant officers in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note, based on the information available, that a direct correlation between mental health/work related stress and vacant/obsolete posts had not been established;
- (2) to note that while an increase in these sickness categories had been evident during some service redesigns (e.g. the reduction in care homes in Community Health and Care in 2017), they had also increased in areas of growth and investment (e.g. early years expansion in Education and Attainment);
- (3) to note that vacancy information had proved difficult to track during this exercise, specifically by date, and that validation was underway across services to ensure that establishment information held on the WMS is up-to-date which will improve how vacancies and obsolete posts are tracked and reported;
- (4) to note the continuation of focused efforts to support mental health and work related stress absences through the Employee Well-being Group;
- (5) to note the active promotion of available supports, jointly with Trades Unions, to ensure that all employees can easily access assistance/guidance when required;
- (6) to note the terms of the discussion which had taken place in relation to this matter;
- (7) to note that information from stress risk assessment forms was not collated or held centrally but that going forward it would be possible for the number of forms being raised to be reported, with the proviso that where the numbers were small, service areas may be grouped together in order to protect anonymity;

- (8) to note that the Attendance Management Policy was currently being reviewed, particularly in terms of its language which should emphasise the supportive nature of the policy, and that the outcome of this was expected to be reported within the next few months; and
- (9) to note the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Forum would speak with the Strategic Lead, outwith the meeting, to discuss what information relating to this matter might usefully be reported to the Forum in perhaps one year's time.

Note: Mr Halfpenny entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

TRADES UNIONS ISSUES

The Forum noted that the Trades Unions had not provided, in advance of the meeting, any issues that they wished to raise.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.

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