

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer – People and Technology****Corporate Services Committee: 19 May 2021**

Subject: Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Services Committee on the review of the trade union facilities provision that supports the collaborative working arrangements with the Trade Unions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the content of the report and approve the amendments to the Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

3. Background

- 3.1 At the December 2020 meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF), the GMB Regional Organiser suggested that the Council should develop a formula from which to calculate facility time allocated to Convenors, seeking ultimately to increase the protected facility time allocated to the GMB Convenor. A group comprising of the Chief Officer – People and Technology, the Strategic People and Change Manager and the Trades Union Convenors met to consider.
- 3.2 The group aimed to explore whether such a formula was achievable and separately, the Strategic People & Change Manager had previously committed to a review of the facility time requested and approved by the GMB Convenor over the period April 2020- March 2021.

4. Main IssuesFormula

- 4.1 The Trade Union Convenors, representing the recognised unions detailed in paragraph 2.1 of the Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement (attached at Appendix 1), were asked whether they would provide real-time membership numbers for this exercise. The intention being to explore the creation of a formula by which to calculate how much protected facility time would be allocated to a Convenor.
- 4.2 Other than GMB, who initiated the request, the other trade unions confirmed that they would not be willing to share membership numbers for comparison purposes. While the Council has an indication of membership through those paying their subscription direct from pay, this does not include those paying

by direct debit to the unions and so was not considered robust enough to use for this exercise. At this juncture, the Chief Officer People and Technology determined there was no further merit in pursuing this aspect of the request.

4.3 In terms of the review of the GMB Convenor's facility time, the following was able to be confirmed from the data the Council is obliged to collate and publish under the Trade Union Act 2016:

- Having been granted 2 days per week protected time in 2013, the time requested and approved by the service during the period (coinciding with the beginning of the global pandemic) was an average of 3 days per week.
- In comparison to the other unions, GMB have half the number of active local representatives in the same period with fewer facilities hours requested.

4.4 The established UNISON, UNITE and Teaching Unions' Convenor roles have all been in place for many years. Based on previously confirmed membership numbers, it is reasonable to conclude that the allocation of protected facility time was based on membership levels. GMB's membership has historically always been lower than the others.

4.5 However, in consideration of the demand from the membership, the additional workload of the Convenor and to better support the substantive service in managing the delivery to our communities during periods of facility time, a proposed increase in facility time of 50% (to 3 days per week) was made and subsequently agreed by GMB Regional Office and West Dunbartonshire Branch.

4.6 The Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement was updated with this increase to the overall Convenor Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and references to the Partnership Working Agreement removed per the Joint Trade Union decision to withdraw from same in 2018.

5. People Implications

5.1 The use and utilisation of Trade Union resources supports joint working and local collective bargaining arrangements within the Council.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 The financial implications associated with the increase in protected facility time can be wholly managed within the substantive service budget.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 No risk assessment is required.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 No EIA is required at this time.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The trade unions were involved in the discussion of proposals and have unanimously agreed the changes to the Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** Effective Trade Union facilities will support the Council's aim to ensure positive and inclusive joint working.

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Date: 31 March 2021

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: None

