

JOINT CONSULTATIVE FORUM

At a Meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, 5 Hall Street, Clydebank on Thursday, 1 December 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Karen Conaghan, Daniel Lennie*, David McBride, Martin Rooney and Hazel Sorrell; Michael Dolan (EIS); Shirley Furie, David Scott and John Wagner (GMB); Claire Mackenzie (SSTA); Norman King, Chris Rossi and Margaret Wood (Unite); and David Smith (UNISON).

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People & Technology; Amanda Graham, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution & Property; Stephen Brooks, Working 4U Manager; Alison McBride, Strategic People & Change Manager; Lisa MacGregor, People & Change Partner; Michael McDougall (Senior Solicitor), and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Michelle McGinty; Derek Hutchison (GMB); Gail Macfarlane, Shared Head of Service – Roads & Neighbourhood; Claire Cusick, Senior Education Officer – Services for Children & Young People; Margaret-Jane Cardno, Head of Strategy and Transformation, Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP); and Sylvia Chatfield, Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability & Addictions, HSCP.

Councillor David McBride 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 8 September 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

Note: Councillor Lennie entered the meeting at this point.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – People & Technology providing an update on the approach to Employee Engagement and on the activities aligned to the People First Strategy.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic People & Change Manager in explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

EQUALLY SAFE AT WORK – PROGRESS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – People & Technology providing an update on the Council's work on the Equally Safe at Work employers' accreditation programme.

Following discussion and having heard the People & Change Partner in explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report and voiced support for training offered to be undertaken by all employees.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS MONITORING: BI-ANNUAL UPDATE, 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – People & Technology advising of progress on employment relations matters for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic People & Change Manager in explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed to note the contents of the report.

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING BI-ANNUAL UPDATE, 1 APRIL 30 SEPTEMBER 2022 (COUNCIL-WIDE)

A report by the Chief Officer – People & Technology providing a detailed analysis on Council-wide employee wellbeing and attendance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic People & Change Manager in explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note the bi-annual findings for reported absence for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022, and in particular:-

- (a) the increase in Council wide sickness absence of approximately 883 full time equivalent (FTE) days lost compared to the same period last year;
 - (b) that the proportion of absence attributed to personal stress had decreased by 5%, acute medical conditions and musculoskeletal had both decreased by approximately 3% and minor illness absence had increased by 9%; and
 - (c) (i) that there was a change in how Covid-19 sickness absence was reported when the nationally agreed special leave provisions for such absences ceased in July 2022 and that, since that time, Covid-19 absences had been captured by the minor illness category thereby accounting for some of the increase in minor illnesses in this reporting period compared to 1 April to 30 September 2021; and (ii) that Long Covid remained an absence category in its own right; and
- (2) to note that the categorising of absences which were due to personal or work-related stress was based on information provided by the employee and that clarification of the recording process would be provided to Mr Dolan.

TRADES UNION ISSUES

Apprenticeship Pay with regards to Minimum Wage related to age after Year 1 is completed (item requested by Margaret Wood, Unite)

Ms Wood provided the undernoted statement in relation to the above issue.

Issue: Modern Apprentices being offered a 2 year apprenticeship without being told that they will be a Level 2 apprentice for 1 year then will be put onto a Level 3 apprenticeship. Meaning they have transferred to a new contract and will not be eligible to be paid the living wage in year two in accordance with their age.

The TU's would want the employer to do what is morally correct and pay these young workers the appropriate rate of pay according to their age after their 1st year is complete. Otherwise it is exploitative as they have very little chance of gaining full time employment within WDC, making them feel used as cheap labour. Most of these young people come from deprived backgrounds many having their own homes from an early age. They have the foresight and strength of character to realise that living hand to mouth for a year will help them out of poverty by gaining experience they can use to secure employment. Two years of living hand to mouth is unsustainable. Whilst we recognise it is within the SG legislation framework not to apply the LW if moved from a Level 2 to a Level 3 apprenticeship these young workers must be told this at the application stage to allow them to make an informed decision when being offered the MA. Which has not happened up until now. Working 4 U need to be more aware of what Apprentice pay will be. Any discussion I have had with them I have been referred to payroll which

suggests they do not know. Working 4U is the contact for the MA's this is just not good enough.

I have spoken to Working 4U and the Lead Officer of HR.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – People & Technology and the Working 4U Manager in response, the Forum agreed:-

- (1) to note: (i) that the current pay model for apprentices had been in place since 2009 and that a review of its fairness was expected to be completed in the near future; and (ii) that a report with recommendations to update the model would be submitted to the appropriate committee in due course; and
- (2) to note that the advancement of apprentices from Level 2 to Level 3 was not automatic and that an assessment took place before apprentices were offered a new contract for Level 3.

The meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.

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