

Report to the Council



Epping Forest District Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 17 February 2015

Subject: Joint Consultative Committee – Terms of Reference

Portfolio: Technology and Support Services (Councillor A. Lion)

Recommending:

That the revised terms of reference of the Joint Consultative Committee be adopted.

Introduction

1. In local government it is usual to have a forum for the Council to formally discuss 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.
2. The Joint Consultative Committee (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.

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3. The Terms of Reference for the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) have not been reviewed for a considerable period of time, and Management Board agreed that a review of the JCC should therefore take place. One of the main issues identified for consideration as part of the review was the perception that non-union members were not represented by the JCC. Whilst the trade unions are not required to represent non trade union members, it should be noted that:
 - the trade union representatives who attend the Committee have to be employees of the Council;
 - there are nine 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.
4. Other work is progressing outside the review of the Terms of Reference of the JCC, regarding internal staff communications. There will provide an opportunity to consider staff participation in a range of policy development areas or initiatives across the Council which may not relate to employment matters. An Employee Engagement Strategy will also be developed over the next six months.
5. Currently, the Lead Officer (the Assistant Director (Human Resources)) for the JCC is able to take forward the views of employees (either trade union members or non-members) and present them to the Committee. If staff wish to comment on any issue

raised, they can do so through their line manager or the Lead Officer for the Committee.

6. In addition, there has been a specific responsibility added to the Terms of Reference for staff to be informed of the outcome of the Committee meetings through 'District Lines' (or other staff newsletters). Officers also generally have access to the JCC agenda in advance of the meeting through the Council's committee management system.
7. The review of the terms of reference of the JCC brings them into line with existing arrangements for similar member panels etc., in that there will be no restriction on the number of substitute members that can attend a meeting. This will apply to both the trade union and member representatives on the Committee.
8. The proposed revised terms of reference of the Joint Consultative Committee are attached. We recommended as set out at the commencement of this report.