

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CORPORATE SUPPORT COMMITTEE ON 10 JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings

REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn – Chief Executive

DATE: 1 April 2021

EXTN: 37600

PORTFOLIO AREA: Chief Executive Directorate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends to the Corporate Support Committee to support the proposals for the future reporting and scheduling of Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Corporate Support Committee:

- (i) Support the continuation of the Informal and Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings, in the existing format; and
- (ii) Support the proposal that this Committee give approval of formal policies and reports submitted to them from the Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings.

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Informal consultation with staff is carried out on regular basis between Human Resources management and Unison as matters arise. Unison is the representative body formally recognised for the purposes of consultation and negotiation by the Council. Formal consultation used to take the form of the Local Joint Staff Panel (LJSP) held quarterly, and regular meetings between Unison, the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources and Customer Services held every 6-8 weeks. In March 2015, a report was submitted to Full Council with the following recommendations, all of which were approved:

1. To disband the Local Joint Staff Panel with effect from the Full Council meeting on 11 March 2015;
2. To establish new arrangements for formal consultation with effect from the civic year 2015/2016 with initial terms of reference as follows:
 - a) Formal consultation with staff to be through a meeting between the Chief Executive, Head of Human Resources and Customer Services, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Human Resources, one other Elected Member to be proposed by the majority group and two members of the Unison Branch

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- b) For a meeting to be quorate it will require all of the above membership to be in attendance, or appropriate substitutes.
 - c) Meetings will take place quarterly, with additional meetings arranged if necessary
 - d) The purpose of the forum will be to facilitate consultation and negotiation between the Council and its employees and to maintain and improve relations between both parties
 - e) Minutes from the Health and Safety Panel will be reported to this forum to be noted and/or for action
 - f) This forum will make recommendations from time to time to Full Council where significant or wide ranging policy changes are proposed, or where there is failure to reach agreement between the Employer and Unison.
3. To amend the Constitution accordingly following consideration of the initial terms of reference at the first meeting of the forum.
- 1.2 Following the approval of the above, the first Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meeting took place in August 2015 and regular meetings have taken place since that date. Attendees on those meetings are the Chief Executive, Human Resources Manager, two Unison representatives and two elected Members (more recently these two Councillors were Cllrs Oppler and Goodheart). Informal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings take place a few weeks before each Formal meeting to set the agendas for the Formal meetings and these Informal meetings are held with the Chief Executive, Human Resources Manager and two Unison representatives.
- 1.3 The Formal meetings are used to discuss both policy and operational issues. According to the Constitution the objective of the Formal meetings is to facilitate consultation between the Council and its employees and to maintain and improve relations between both parties. The Formal meetings also consider minutes from the Health and Safety Panel. It is not an executive body, but may make recommendations where appropriate to Full Council. This is usual in the case of Policies or Reports which require Full Council approval. It is agreed, by the Members on The Panel, UNISON, and Officers, that the format has worked well, and has encouraged a more informal discussion approach leading to more agreement on policies.
- 1.4 Due to the change to the Committee system from May 2021, it is proposed that instead of Reports or Policies being referred to Full Council for approval, that they come to the Corporate Support Committee. It is also proposed that the existing Formal and Informal Unison meetings continue to take place in their normal form and that meetings of the Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meeting would take place to fit in with the Committee timetable of meetings and allow for such items to feed through to the Committee for consideration and approval.
- 1.5 In the Constitution at Part 3 – Joint Staff Consultative Panel [which should read Staff Consultation Panel] at Paragraph 8.4 – it states that this Consultation Panel meeting should report to the Corporate Support Committee and that the 2 Councillors on the Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel should be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporate Support Committee.

1.6 The next Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meeting to take place following this Committee meeting is scheduled for 22 September 2021 and the two Councillors would start attending these meetings from this date and all scheduled meetings of the Formal Panel would be given to those Councillors for their diaries.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

It is proposed that the Corporate Support Committee give approval to the continuation of the Informal and Formal Unison Staff Consultation Panel meetings, in the existing form and that the Committee give approval that formal policies and reports be submitted to them for formal approval.

3. OPTIONS:

- (a) to support the recommendations
- (b) consider an alternative approach

4. CONSULTATION:

The Portfolio Holder and CEO agree with the recommendation within the report.

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify) Unison CMT	X	

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)

	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

Failure to have such a formal process would result in reduced communication, consultation and negotiation between the Council and Unison and would not give an authorised channel by which Council Policies and Procedures could be implemented via thorough consultation and approval.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To ensure continued communication, consultation and negotiation between the Council and Unison, to allow for fuller exploration of matters of concern to Staff, Managers and Elected Members and to ensure that Council Policies and Procedures are implemented via thorough consultation and approval.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None