

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee

Monday, 20 November 2023

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Ms Karen Adams (Unite), Councillor John Divers, Ms Janis Donaldson (UNISON), Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Ms Shona Scott (GMB), Ms Anita Stuart (GMB)

SUBSTITUTES

Mr Alan Murdock substituted for Ms Lesley-Anne MacAskill (GMB)

APOLOGIES

Ms Karen Donaldson (UNISON), Mr David Eddie (UNISON), Mr Marc Jackson (Unite), Ms Lesley-Anne MacAskill (GMB), Mr Ken Matthews (UNISON)

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive; Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Alan Murdock (GMB) and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

Councillor Bridget Mustard, as Chair of the Joint Consultative Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 21 and 23 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the Committee noted the following declarations:

Councillor Divers declared that he was a member of Unite, Unison and the Trade Union Council.

Councillor Harris declared that she was a member of UNISON.

Councillor Leadbitter declared that he was a member of Unite.

Councillor McLennan declared that he was a member of EIS and that he would be providing a transparency statement. He advised that a transparency statement as agreed with the Standards Commission, Monitoring Officer and himself was also sent to the Ethical Standards Commissioner by the Standards Commission. He advised that he has a connection, via his partner's employment, that could be an interest that requires to be declared in any discussion on the particular line of the budget that would directly impact on their post. He did not consider, however, that it would meet the objective test in respect of the budget as a whole. This is because

he does do not consider that a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts (being that the connection only applied to one line of the budget) would reasonably regard the connection as being so significant, in terms of consideration of the overall budget, that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making on the overall budget.

He would need to declare the interest and leave the room if that particular line is being discussed (as opposed to simply being noted), until the discussion and any voting on that line had concluded.

There were no further declarations from Committee Members in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Resolution

The Meeting resolved that under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Item 5 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph Number of Minute	Paragraph Number of Schedule 7a and reason
6	1 - Information relating to staffing matters

4. Quorum

The Chair confirmed that the meeting was not quorate as there were only 4 out of the 5 Trade Union members in attendance.

The Committee agreed to continue with the meeting.

5. Minute of meeting held 31 October 2023

The minute of the meeting held 31 October 2023 was submitted and approved. Councillor McLennan asked that under reference to paragraph 3 that the wording of his transparency statement be updated. He advised that he would provide the Clerk with the wording to be used.

This was unanimously agreed by the Committee and the Clerk will update the minute.

Under reference to paragraph 3, Councillor Divers asked if the paragraph name could be changed from Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests as there are no group decisions at this Committee.

This was unanimously agreed by the Committee and the Clerk will change the paragraph name to Declaration of Members Interests.

6. Trade Union Feedback on Workforce Planning Implications of Corporate and Financial Planning

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development invited the Trade Union representatives to give their feedback on the workforce planning implications of corporate and financial planning.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) raised concerns around budget cuts and cuts to staff jobs. The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that the Council has an established and comprehensive programme of Transform which provides opportunities to match suitable employment to those at risk. This also includes training and re-skilling which is a priority over job losses. Vacancies are being held for those in Transform and job re-design could be looked at. There is also potential for voluntary exits for those at risk.

Ms Stuart (GMB) raised concern that one post involves significantly more than has been reported.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that she has been in touch with the service and is awaiting an update.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) sought clarification on what would happen to the staff remaining as jobs are being cut but the work still needs to be done.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that there are a range of measures to manage this including reprioritisation and redistribution of tasks tied into the use of technology and new ways of working.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) further raised concerns that jobs being cut in the contact centre would increase the time it took to speak to an advisor which could lead to more irate people on the phone.

The Chief Executive advised that a lot of services are now online so less need for phone lines but the information hubs have been rolled out and are providing a good service and are open longer hours.

Ms Scott (GMB) sought clarification on whether policies were going to be looked at if timescales were missed due to an increase in staff workload. She also asked what was happening with Keith Access Point as it was closed due to the pandemic and has never reopened.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised that policies were based on best practice principles and guidance however there would often be circumstances that extended the length of time taken in any given process, usually for specific reasons. She further advised that she would look into what was happening with Keith Access Point.

Ms Donaldson (UNISON) asked if there were risk assessments in place for verbal abuse etc in the contact centre.

The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development advised she would check and feedback.

There was further discussion around vacancy shortleeting and training for managers.

The date of the next meeting will depend on other budget proposals.

The Clerk was asked to look for quarterly dates starting in March 2024 and these will be sent out to the Committee members.