

**RECOMMENDATION**

**EMPLOYEES' CONSULTATIVE FORUM  
MINUTES**

**31 JANUARY 2013**

**Chairman:** \* Mr G Martin

**Councillors:** \* Mrs Camilla Bath \* Barry Macleod-Cullinane (1)  
\* Bob Currie † Paul Osborn  
\* Graham Henson \* Navin Shah (3)  
\* Thaya Idaikkadar

**Representatives  
of HTCC:** Ms L Snowdon

**Representatives  
of UNISON:** Ms L Ahmad \* Mr S Compton  
\* Mr D Butterfield

**Representatives  
of GMB:** \* Mr S Karia

\* Denotes Member present  
(1) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Members  
† Denotes apologies received

**RECOMMENDED ITEM**

**120. Review of the Terms of Reference for the Employee Consultative Forum**

An officer introduced a report which set out proposals for changes to the Forum's Terms of Reference, which included reducing Forum meetings to twice a year and establishing a new Sub-Group to meet six times a year.

The officer reported that:

- a Working Group had been established to review the Forum's Terms of Reference. This Working Group was made up of Trade Union representatives, Councillors and Officers;
- the Working Group believed that it was important to ensure that all issues that were usually presented to the Forum were reviewed in more detail and produce agreed outcomes;
- the Working Group also believed that it was important that meetings between the Trade Unions and the Council were more frequent to ensure that outcomes were facilitated in a shorter space of time;
- the report enclosed the proposed Terms of Reference for the Forum and the proposed Sub-Group.

The Vice-Chair of the Forum commented that the proposals had been developed in agreement with the political groups and the Trade Unions. These proposals ensured more fluidity and flexibility in being able to resolve issues between the Trade Unions and the Council.

In response to queries raised by Members of the Forum, officers responded as follows:

- reference to a change being required due to some discussions in the public not being good for the Council's reputation related to the perception provided at meetings. Whilst it was believed that there was good robust debate at meetings and a good relationship between the Council and the Trade Unions, any independent observers may believe that there was total conflict despite this not being the case. Some Members of the Forum commented that there was a good level of debate at meetings and that the Forum played a vital role in the relationship between Trade Unions and the Council. This ultimately improved the services delivered to residents by the Council;
- although it was noted that attendance at the Sub-Group may be difficult for Members who worked during the day, it was envisaged that attendance would be made up from the pool of Members on the Forum and that for each meeting there would always be a Member able to attend. Some Members commented that despite this response, some Members would not be able to attend during the day; and would limit the pool of expertise Members provided;
- action points would be produced from the Sub-Group meetings. These would then be reported to the Forum. The meetings of the Sub-Group did not specify that these meetings would be held in public but this could be investigated. It was not intended to recreate formal Forum procedures as part of these Sub-Group meetings.

A Member of the Forum commented that it was important that the outcomes from the Sub-Group were a matter of public record. It was important that the outcomes were reported publicly to ensure that they could be scrutinised accordingly. The Member believed that further work was therefore required on the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Group and should be reported back to a future meeting of the Forum. The Vice-Chair of the Forum commented that this suggestion highlighted the reasons why a change was required. Quicker outcomes were required and action points from the Sub-Group could always be published publicly.

An officer responded that the outcomes would be formally reported to the Forum at its meetings. Additionally the issues raised by the Member did not require an alteration to the Terms of Reference but were rather procedural issues to resolve. This could be further considered if required.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Cabinet)

That the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference of the Employees' Consultative Forum be agreed.

*(Councillors Camilla Bath and Barry Macleod-Cullinane wished to be recorded as having voted against the recommendation).*