

FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

1. Purpose of the report

To consider changing the frequency of the Local Joint Committee (LJC) meetings from twice per year to four times per year and to consider holding the meetings on a day other than Friday.

Key Issues

- The LJC is a consultative meeting involving Authority Members and employees.
- Meetings of the LJC currently take place twice per year in June and November. Recently there have been difficulties in having enough members from both sides to convene a quorate meeting so the scheduled dates have needed to be changed at short notice.
- Changing to quarterly meetings would fit in with Unison and staff representatives quarterly meetings with both Human Resources and the Leadership Team and may enable more items for consideration by the LJC to be identified.
- Holding the meetings on a day other than Friday may enable more staff representatives to be able to attend meetings.

2. Recommendations

- 1. The future meetings of the Local Joint Committee are held on a quarterly basis.**
- 2. That the dates proposed for 2019 are agreed, following consideration of paragraph 12 of this report, for inclusion in the calendar of meetings for 2019 which will go to the annual Authority meeting in July 2018 for approval.**
- 3. That two extra meetings are added to the Local Joint Committee meeting schedule for 2018 as proposed in paragraph 13 of this report.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. Under the Information and Consultation Regulations 2005 (ICE) the Authority must have arrangements in place to make sure that employees are consulted on work place changes that may impact upon them. The LJC is just one element in this consultation but it is an important opportunity for employees and Members to meet to discuss employment issues and this is reflected in the fact that most local authorities have some type of joint consultative committee in place.

Background Information

4. At its last meeting the LJC considered a report on the constitution and functions of the LJC. The report included proposals for the organisation of the Committee meetings and specifically requested the LJC to consider the frequency of its meetings.
5. The current constitution states that the Committee should meet as required but not less than twice per year. In reality in most years more than 2 meetings are held. (There were 3 in 2015 but one of those was because the November meeting in 2014 was cancelled). The report suggested that the 6 month frequency may contribute to low attendance as the Committee does not gain momentum or generate a feeling of belonging. Also if this was a factor it may be exacerbated by the attempts to arrange meeting dates around having a quorum as this does not necessarily achieve or encourage consistent membership. The report asked LJC to consider if the current

frequency of meetings was working.

6. On consideration of this issue at the last meeting it was suggested that LJC should meet more frequently than the current 2 meetings per year. Staff representatives suggested that the Committee meetings could be linked to their quarterly meetings with both Human Resources and the Senior Leadership Team and there was general support for this to happen.
7. The report to the last meeting also referred to the challenge relating to recent meetings with regard to establishing a quorum, which has been a problem on both the Member and Staff sides. Currently LJC meetings are arranged for a Friday on the same day as an existing meeting involving Members. Friday is the preferred day for all meetings of the Authority and its Committees as most of our Members are actively involved in other local authorities or organisations and experience has shown that we tend to get better attendance. It is usual for meetings of LJC to be held on the same day as other Member meetings to avoid additional journeys to and from Aldern House and to maximise attendance.
8. However some employees have been unable to attend LJC meetings because Friday is not one of their normal working days or on the day of the meeting they are not scheduled to work. LJC were asked to consider whether more could be done to help Committee members who are employees attend meetings, for example by clarifying the level of facility time available or encouraging managers to set Team schedules according to LJC meeting dates or allowing Team members to swap working days to facilitate their attendance.
9. On consideration of this issue at the last meeting it was suggested that meetings could possibly be held on Thursdays when Planning Committee site visits are also held and the meeting could be held either before the site visits or after.
10. The proposals in this report follow on from the LJC's considerations of these issues, outlined above, at the last meeting.

Proposals

11. It is proposed that future meetings of the LJC are set on a quarterly basis and that where possible, and if both sides are agreeable, meetings are held on Thursdays to maximise attendance from both sides.
12. The dates proposed for LJC meetings in 2019 are Thursday 21 or Friday 22 March, Thursday 13* or Friday 28 June, Thursday 10* or Friday 18 October, Thursday 12* or Friday 20 December. (Thursday dates marked * are the same dates as proposed for Planning Committee site visits in 2019.) These dates would fit in with the Unison and Staff representatives quarterly meetings with HR and with the Senior Leadership Team schedule. If both sides are agreeable to the first proposal, in paragraph 11, then it is proposed that the Thursday dates are set for the meetings in 2019.
13. If the proposals in paragraphs 11 and 12 are agreed the LJC is also asked to consider if it wishes to add extra meetings to the schedule for 2018. Extra meetings would need to fit around the current scheduled calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2018. If both sides are agreeable to this the currently scheduled meeting for 16 November would be cancelled and rescheduled to Thursday 11* or Thursday 18 October and an extra meeting held on Thursday 13* December or Friday 21 December. (Thursday dates marked * are the same dates as currently scheduled Planning Committee site visits.)

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

14. The proposed changes to the frequency of meetings would have an impact on Members' claims for travel and subsistence and the facility time given to employees.

Risk Management:

15. The Authority needs to make sure it has adequate and effective consultation mechanisms in place.

Sustainability:

16. None.

Equality:

17. The Authority regularly considers the arrangements for all its meetings so that it does not unintentionally prevent or put off specific groups or individuals from participating.

18. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

19. Appendices – None.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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