

Staff Governance Committee

UNISON response

UNISON welcomes the new and open thinking which has gone into revising staff governance arrangements, and the willingness to include trade unions in both the discussion and the new structures. The current proposals have the basis of a good structure, and we want to be in a situation where all parties can support this. However there remain significant weaknesses in the proposals which mean we cannot support them at present. The five specific points are:

- **The membership of the committee.** It is insufficiently clear which, how many, and how trade union representatives will be involved.
- **The lack of clarity around dealing with exempt matters.** It is unclear exactly these will be handled. This includes (but is not limited to) how all trade union health and safety reps will be involved in discussions around serious health and safety issues.
- **Agenda items.** Standing orders currently require all agenda items to have a report from officers, and this seriously inhibits trade unions taking items forward to this committee.
- **Health and safety.** It is unclear what health and safety structure would lie behind the proposals to give this committee responsibility for those matters. While there have been assurances at Corporate Health & Safety Committee about this structure, we request to see this in writing.
- **Disagreements in committee.** There is no clarity around how disagreements between unions and the council will be handled.

We believe that it is possible to reach mutually acceptable solutions to these items, which would allow a proposal to go forward which would command the support of all interested parties. Pending the resolution of this, we request that no decision be taken on this matter.

GMB response

I write to respond to the above on behalf of the Aberdeen Branch A13 of GMB.

I raised some points at the meeting we held with the Chief Executive, I will outline them below.

Firstly may I thank you and the Chief Executive for the very positive and constructive way in which the meeting was held with clear lines of purpose laid out in the proposals, they were most welcome.

One of the matters was that of numbers, in a previous paper there was to be one GMB rep, I cannot support this as I feel that there should be a minimum of two from GMB in attendance, in this instance I propose our President / Convener, and Secretary, (elected for such purposes) this would fit into our rule book, if there were to be figures along the JCC line then we can have a further person from the Branch.

The Matter of time to attend, prepare, and respond, is essentially vital, we are experiencing difficulty currently in these matters and for the Governance of ACC we must have full focus to address and participate in the affairs of The Council and its partner bodies.

Regarding the incorporation of Health and Safety at a Corporate level into this committee, I would suggest that it have a standalone Agenda item (separate meeting) as it is too important to enclose with other business, not a Sub Committee but the full committee only dealing with a single Agenda Item, sub divided into the normal format, and if necessary the same for former JCC type issues if needed regarding the time

factor, again the full committee and not a Sub Committee to give full focus and commitment. We currently enjoy having meetings with HR services to go over matters of policy, as well as general issues, this is very beneficial and reflects the reason we do not meet for a JCC as we benefit from both the interaction and the establishment of Trust.

Regarding the other aims and strategies of the committee I do not foresee any difficulty in committing to these as they will be within the bounds of Legislation, and Employment Law as well as Established Council Policy and where we are to create new policy we will strive for a mutual understanding.

If any formal agreement is required we can seek the appropriate involvement of the Parent Trade Union through the appointed officers.

We look forward to a firm focus and commitment by all parties that will be mutually beneficial to us all.

Use of word “partnership” or “partnership arrangement” in Terms of Reference – can this either be changed to “partnership approach”, or “mutuality”? Concern that unions will be asked to sign up to a partnership agreement.

EIS response

The issues that were raised in the EIS response seem to have been addressed by the Terms of Reference and the assurances of the CEO have been noted. Just a couple of points. Will the terms of reference include any statement on the frequency of the meetings?

There was some discussion around the number of trade union representatives at the meeting. The committee has a health and safety role so we would require of H and S officer to be present as well as our local area secretaries. This still has to be firmed up. Apart from this detail, the EIS agrees the terms of Reference.

SSTA response

I note that in the original paper presented to the Trade Unions that the SSTA were absent from the Trade Union representatives list and that that was perhaps an oversight. Our expectation is that the SSTA would be invited to this committee and that given the current allocation of Facility time to the SSTA one representative from the SSTA would attend meetings of the SCF.

We have no issues to raise concerning the terms of reference of the SCF as outlined in your presentation.

UNITE response

The Committee should be split to create a sub committee for health and safety governance as it takes up a lot of time in its own

There should be equality of membership between Elected members and TU workplace reps as Cllrs are not their as advisers nor should the TU reps

Also full time TU Regional officers should be ex office members of the committee and its sub committees with a right to attend and speak at the mtgs if they so wish but without voting rights