

Joint Staff Employer Forum (JSEF) - Terms of Reference

JSEF has traditionally been a quarterly meeting. Its terms of reference are attached. Additionally it has a function in recommending actions that have been initiated via the Collective Grievance Procedure.

Current trades union branch secretaries have both been in post for 2 years, and in light of new appointment of Head of HR it seems timely to examine the effectiveness of this body.

In the spirit of open communication, it is hoped that all members of the JSEF will respond with their comments and observations, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of this body.

Some perceived problems with the JSEF are outlined below:

- Over the last year meetings have been irregular
- It is seen as over-formal in nature and not conducive to open debate
- The agenda is most often set by HR, rather than jointly, so that this shapes the nature of the debate.
- Because most corporate consultation between HR and the unions happens weekly, independent of this body, it is sometimes seen as informing councillors 'after the fact', when decisions have already been made.

The advantages of JSEF are:

- It is the only forum where HR, unions and councillors or all sides can discuss corporate issues.
- It has previously been very effective in being a forum for communication between staff and council members.

Discussion is invited as to whether this forum meets your needs in communicating information?

Does it communicate effectively?

If the answer is no to either of these, please give some thought as to how you think it could be improved.

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JOINT STAFF EMPLOYER FORUM

Terms of Reference - June 2002

The Forum will:

- 1 Be recognised as the means for corporate consultation and, where appropriate, arrange negotiations on matters with Council-wide implications which the Council has the power to decide and comment.
- 2 Make direct recommendations to the Executive on matters with corporate implications.

The general aims of the Forum are:

- 1 To ensure that the views of staff are obtained on issues of mutual concern or interest.
- 2 To provide a mechanism for feedback on the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures, including issues referred from departmental consultative forums.
- 3 To give representatives of recognised trade unions the opportunity to influence the decision of the employers on appropriate matters.
- 4 To allow staff representations to be raised with the employers on specific problems affecting staff.

The Forum will not discuss matters which are dealt with:

- 1 By the use of the grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- 2 At local level in the first instance, i.e items applicable only to a limited number of individuals or a limited area which should properly be discussed at departmental staff employer forums and do not have implications for corporate policies or procedures. This does not apply to matters affecting minority groups.
- 3 By the Council, i.e will not be able to veto, prospectively or retrospectively, decisions taken by the Council.