

# Protocol on Consultations with Employees

## 1. Introduction

The Council is committed to regular and full communication with recognised trades unions as an important means of developing and maintaining high quality services for the people of Oxfordshire.

## 2. Channels of Communication

This communication mostly takes place between managers and employee representatives through informal and ad hoc means. However, the Council also has the formal channels set out below:

- (i) Three Joint Employee Committees covering Teachers, Fire Service and all other employees of the Council. These Joint Committees will normally meet quarterly and will comprise nominated elected members of the Council and relevant recognised trades unions. Their function is:
  - consultation and negotiation;
  - resolution of collective disputes;
  - to make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet and Council Committees;
  - to consider matters which have failed to be agreed at local level or which have general application;
  - other relevant matters by mutual agreement.

Each Joint Committee will define the detail of its own procedural and operating rules including arrangements for emergency meetings. For the avoidance of doubt, none of the Council, Cabinet, or Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution apply to meetings of the Employee Consultative Committees.

- (ii) Representatives of recognised trades unions may ask to meet with the Cabinet member responsible for Personnel matters. They may also address the Cabinet, any committee of the Cabinet, the Council or any committee of the Council, or a scrutiny committee, in accordance with the requirements set out in the Council Procedure Rules in this Constitution.
- (iii) Nominated representatives of recognised trades unions will be sent by the Proper Officer each month a copy of the Cabinet's four month forward plan of key decisions as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules at the same time as it is issued to members of the Council. The Proper Officer will also automatically send to the nominated representatives a copy of the agenda, reports and minutes of meetings of the Cabinet, any committee of the Cabinet and the

Remuneration Committee. The nominated trades union representatives may request copies of specific Scrutiny Committee agenda, reports or minutes. All such papers will be supplied free of charge.

- (iv) Nominated trades union representatives may also request a copy of any background paper listed on a published report for any meeting of the Cabinet, committee of the Cabinet, scrutiny committee or committee of the Council. These will be provided free of charge by the Proper Officer.

In the case of both (iii) and (iv) above, confidential or exempt information will not be sent to trades union representatives unless there are special circumstances which would warrant this. Any matters concerning access to information are to be resolved by the Monitoring Officer.