



DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Joint Consultative Committee

1.0) Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises the following Trade Unions for consultation and collective bargaining purposes, GMB, NIPSA, UCATT and UNITE. They are considered by the Council to represent the collective views of all employees who are subscribing members of these unions.
- 1.2 Down District Council (DDC) wishes to ensure that its staff who are members of a recognised Trade Union have appropriate consultation rights, information and opportunities to contribute to the development of its policies and practices that affect them, to make their views known, and to have those views taken into account in the Council's decision making process. This document is designed to meet these needs.
- 1.3 The Council recognises not all employees are represented by a recognised Trade Union and provision for communicating and consulting with these employees is detailed in the Employee Communication and Consultation procedure.

2.0) Purpose

- 2.1 The principle purpose of the LJCC is to further good industrial relations and efficiency through the development of an acceptable system of relationships and communications between the Trade Unions and the Council.

The Council believes effective internal communication and consultation is vital for achieving its purpose, vision and objectives as set out in its Corporate Plan. Therefore this document describes:-

- Why communications and consultation are important
- The difference between communication and consultation
- Consultation and Collective Bargaining
- How communication and consultation will operate within DDC
- Topics for inclusion within the process

3.0) The Importance of Communication and Consultation

- 3.1 Good communication and consultation are central to effective management processes and are important when dealing with changes in working practices and procedures. Consulting with employees allows them to perform at their best as they know their duties, obligations and rights, and have the opportunity to make their views known on issues that affect them. Effective communication can:-

- **Improve organisational effectiveness** – e.g. time spent communicating at the outset of a new project or development can minimise misunderstandings.

- **Improve management performance and decision making** – by allowing employees to express their views enables the Council to arrive at sound decisions which are more likely to be accepted.
- **Improve employees' performance and commitment** – with accurate information about their jobs, targets and feedback, performance should improve. Furthermore commitment is also strengthened where employees are aware of what the Council is aiming to achieve and how, as individuals, they can influence decisions.
- **Help develop greater trust** - discussing issues of common interest and allowing employees the opportunity of expressing their views can promote improved manager/employee relations.
- **Increase job satisfaction** – providing employees with an understanding of how their job fits into the workings of the Council as a whole.

4.0) Communication Vs Consultation

4.1 Communication is the provision and exchange of information between management and employees. Current, formal, methods use to support employee communication are:-

- Core Brief
- Team Meetings
- Job Chats
- Intranet
- Down Time
- Employee Communication and Consultation (ECC for non-Trade Union members)

Consultation is a process by which management and employees, or their representatives, jointly examine and discuss issues of mutual concern, through seeking acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information. Consultation involves management actively meeting with employees and/or their representatives, and taking account of views before making a decision.

5.0) Consultation Vs Negotiation

5.1 Consultation is distinctly different from negotiation, for example over pay or changes to terms and conditions, where both the employer and the Trade Unions take responsibility for fulfilling the bargain. This is not the same as consultation and is not addressed within this policy. With consultation the responsibility for decision making remains with management. Negotiation is carried out via an alternative mechanism therefore by definition this is a consultation forum-

6.0) How communication and consultation will operate within DDC

6.1 It is intended for management to meet with local Trade Union representatives on a regular basis.

6.2 It is intended that LJCC meetings would take place, initially, at least four times per year. The availability of local Trade Union representatives and the nature of the communication may dictate the frequency of meetings. Once established the frequency

of the meetings could change to meet business demands and if required additional meetings could be called either on an adhoc or regular basis.

- 6.3 From time to time depending on the items for communication/consultation management may wish to invite other officers/third parties as deemed appropriate. Likewise on occasions local Trade Union representatives may wish to invite their full time officials to an LJCC meeting. In all cases this should be noted to all parties in advance of the meeting and any objections considered.

7.0) Composition of LJCC

- 7.1 It is intended locally elected Trade Union representatives would participate in the LJCC process with at least one representative from each union in attendance.
- 7.2 A quorum of at least one representative from three of the recognised Trade Unions as stated in 1.1 would be required to attend for a meeting to proceed.
- 7.3 Meetings would be chaired by alternate rotation on an annual basis by a management representative and by local Trade Union representative. The role of vice-chair would also rotate on an annual basis between management and Trade Unions.
- 7.4 For all meetings there will also be a vice-chair nominated by management and local Trade Union representatives who will alternate accordingly (ie management representative chair/Trade Union vice-chair and vice-versa)

8.0) Topics for Consultation

- 8.1 The functions of the LJCC shall be to secure the largest possible measure of joint consultation regarding the conditions of employment as laid down by National Joint Council for Local Government Services along with other locally negotiated agreements as adopted and amended from time to time. Examples of topics on which information will be provided and on which local Trade Union representatives, as appropriate, be consulted could include:-
- Interpretation and examination of any problems that might arise in the implementation of the Scheme of Conditions of Service.
 - The development of employment policies, codes of practice and regulations
 - The Council's arrangements for training and developing staff

The above is not an exhaustive list and other items for consultation may be included from time to time by either party.

9.0) Role of the Parties to the LJCC

- 9.1 Participants of the LJCC would be expected to contribute to the LJCC process by:-
- As identified at 7.1 and 7.2
 - Attending Meetings
 - Seeking views from the parties they represent
 - Sharing information and feedback from LJCC meetings with the parties they represent.
 - Using their best endeavours, ensure timely submission of agenda items feedback from their respective parties.

- 9.2 All representatives will be afforded reasonable time to consult with the parties whom they represent and to attend all meetings of the LJCC.

10.0) LJCC Meeting Format

- 10.1 This policy does not extend to cover, in detail, the format or procedures to be followed at meetings. Once re-established, the local Trade Union representatives and management would be responsible for the implementation review and maintenance of agreed rules and procedures etc.
- 10.2 Minutes taken at the meetings should be by way of an Action Sheet to be signed jointly by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and that actions would be agreed at the end of the meeting; minutes to be made available and displayed for the attention of all Trade Union Members.

11.0) Handling Confidential Information

- 11.1 Representatives participating in this process will have a duty of confidentiality and are not authorised to reveal any information which, in the legitimate interest of the Council, has been expressly provided to him/her in confidence. This obligation will continue to apply even after the cessation of a term of office as a Trade Union representative and/or their employment with the Council.

12.0) Disagreement

- 12.1 While the objective of both the Council and the Trade Union representatives should be to consult with a view to reaching agreement it is recognised that at times there will be disagreement on issues.

13.0) Reports and Action Points

- 13.1 DDC will provide administrative support for this purpose. Decisions made and jointly agreed Action Points of meetings will be displayed on notice boards throughout Council premises and will be available on the 'W' Drive and Intranet. Actions points would be agreed at the end of each meeting by the chair and vice-chair.

14.0) Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 It is intended to review this agreement annually to ensure it continues to meet the purpose as set out in 2.0.

**DATE OF ISSUE
DECEMBER 2008**