

Working Together Protocol

Introduction

This Working Together Protocol is a collective agreement between the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) and the recognised Trade Unions. It applies to all Council employees and trade union representatives and governs how we should behave in all engagements, including informal and formal meetings, requests for information and working together in consultation.

This Protocol aims to provide employees with an effective voice at work through their Trade Unions and we believe in fair work that offers opportunity, security, fulfilment, and respect; that balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees and that can generate benefits for individuals, organisations, and society.

The Council and the Trade Unions are committed to working together to achieve shared aims, objectives, and outcomes. This will be carried out in the spirit of respect, integrity, and flexibility as partners in employee matters.

This Protocol supports the formal collective bargaining arrangements already in place.

Commitment

We recognise that:

- We share common interests in supporting the Council to deliver services to the people of Edinburgh;
- We should promote and encourage an inclusive working environment based on dignity, respect, fairness and equality, providing access to training and learning opportunities that encourage employee skills and development, as well as ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all;
- We have different roles, responsibilities, and stakeholders;
- We all have knowledge and experience which is valuable in working together effectively; and
- It is everyone's responsibility to contribute in a positive and constructive way.

We are committed to:

- developing and maintaining good formal and informal working relations that build trust, share responsibility, respect each other's independence, and recognise the rights, responsibilities, and differences of one another.
- promoting open and constructive dialogue and will share information openly and in a timely manner;
- working within the guidance provided by the ACAS '[Code of Practice - Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities](#)' and the associated guidance '[Trade Union Representation in the Workplace](#)';
- reaching agreement wherever possible, accepting that this will not always be achievable.

Behaviours

Working Together we will:

- Engage with each other:
 - In a timely and meaningful manner
 - Collaboratively
 - Honestly
 - Respectfully
 - With an open mind
- Participate constructively:
 - Raise issue with the right person
 - Share information openly and in a timely manner

- Anticipate problems and work together to resolve them
- Share priorities
- Offer advice
- Have a positive attitude:
 - Adopt a problem-solving approach
 - Aim for a 'win-win' (accepting that this may not always be achievable)
 - Focus on outcomes
 - Recommend solutions
- Adopt behaviours which are:
 - Designed to persuade not intimidate
 - Assertive not aggressive
 - Open and honest not manipulative
 - A role model to all colleagues and union members
- Communicate appropriately:
 - Use language that will not offend or discriminate
 - Listen to others
 - Be constructive, not negative
 - Don't interrupt others or dominate the discussion – everyone has a contribution to make
 - Avoid jargon – or explain it if it's essential

Meeting Arrangements

Working in partnership means ensuring all parties are engaged and involved at an early stage in any process, and due to the diverse work of the Council this requires regular informal and formal meetings to discuss matters at both a corporate and local level.

A list of regular Council and Trade Union meetings can be found as an appendix to the Protocol and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Time is valuable and meetings between us need to be effective and solution focussed. We agree that meetings should be well managed and that we will:

- Circulate papers in advance of the meeting, providing members with sufficient time to review, understand and where appropriate engage with and gather colleague or member feedback;
- Contribute to meeting agendas and provide relevant information so that responses can be given at the meeting;
- Have the right people at the meeting so that decisions can be made;
- Contribute constructively to the meetings adhering to the behaviours as outlined in this Protocol;
- Use formal meetings appropriately i.e., raising the appropriate issues within the appropriate meetings, and avoid duplication or unnecessary escalation.

Attendance at meetings should be balanced from both sides and proportional to the purpose of the meeting.

Resources & Information

We recognise the importance of investment in partnership working and therefore we will provide the Trade Unions with time and resources to support this protocol as outlined in the Time Off for Trade Union Representatives Policy.

In line with the Working Together Behaviours, both parties will share information openly, in a timely manner and will seek to remove any barriers to this commitment. We will ensure that sufficient relevant information is provided at the earliest possible opportunity to facilitate any consultation process.

Both parties to this Protocol understand and accept that there will be times when it is necessary to exchange or share confidential information. Management and the Trade Unions undertake to treat any confidential information as confidential and to use it solely for the purpose of partnership working business, not to disclose it to any third party, and not to make it publicly available or accessible in any way, except with the prior written consent of the disclosing party. Any confidential information should be properly marked to ensure those in receipt are aware of the nature.

Monitoring, Review and Amendment

This Protocol will be continuously monitored. Once agreement is reached, it will be subject to a formal review every two years. The Protocol may only be amended by the Partnership at Work Meeting. Notice of any proposed amendment must be given and circulated to Partnership at Work Meeting members at least one month before a meeting.

Termination of this Protocol

This Protocol may be terminated by either side on giving 12 months' notice.

Agreement

Signatories

Management Side

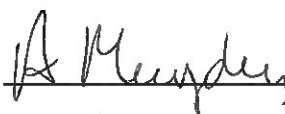


Chief Executive

Trade Union Side



Staff Side Secretary



Teachers' Side Secretary