

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Wednesday, 11 April 2012
7.00pm to 7.16pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

- Present:** Councillors: Avey, Carr (Chairman), Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin and Iles
- Substitute:** Councillor:
Purdy (Substitute for Irvine)
- In Attendance:** Paula Charker, Employee Relations Manager
Ralph Edwards, Head of HR
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer
Perry Holmes, Monitoring Officer
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

985 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 29 February 2012 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

986 Apologies for absence

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor Irvine.

987 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

988 Declarations of interest

Councillor Christine Godwin declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because she was a member of UNISON and retained her right to speak and vote.

989 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

Discussion:

This report considered the proposed changes to the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy following the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010. It also gave the council the opportunity to rationalise the policy, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. A

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Diversity Impact Assessment screening form had been completed and it was not necessary to undertake a full impact assessment. The Audit Committee considered the report on 29 March 2012 and agreed to refer the Policy to Employment Matters Committee for consideration and Council for approval.

Members discussed whether the Audit Committee had recommended any proposed changes had any particular impact on staff. Officers responded that the Audit Committee had not recommended any such changes.

Decision:

The Committee referred the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to Council for final consideration and approval.

990 Whistleblowing Policy

Discussion:

This report considered the proposed changes to the Whistleblowing Policy following the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010. The Audit Committee had asked for the policy to be updated to incorporate relevant changes under the Bribery Act 2010 and provide staff with a clear route for raising concerns. The proposed changes to the policy were highlighted in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

Members noted that the Audit Committee received an annual review of whistleblowing cases and discussed whether there should be a role for the Employment Matters Committee to receive an annual review of whistleblowing cases given that cases would relate to a wide range of issues given the Audit Committee would concentrate on fraud issues. Officers responded that this would be possible.

A Diversity Impact Assessment screening form had been completed and it was not necessary to undertake a full impact assessment.

Decision:

1. The Committee referred the Whistleblowing Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to Council for final consideration and approval.
2. The Committee agreed to receive an annual report on whistleblowing cases to examine the management issues which impact on the organisation including where training needs may be identified.

991 Budget Proposals and Implications for Staff

Discussion:

This report provided details of new reviews undertaken since April 2011 with detailed information on current reviews in respect of Shalder House, Balfour

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Centre, Duke of Edinburgh Team (Youth Services), Waste Services (Graffiti Removal and Pest Control Teams), Better for Less and Schools.

The report also provided detailed information on the transfer of staff from and to the Council as requested by the Committee at its last meeting.

The report summarised the current position on Employment Tribunal claims noting that the Council had successfully defended and won all claims that had gone to a hearing.

The report provided details of the support for staff affected by any of the reviews. It was noted that Service Diversity Impact Assessments had been completed on the areas subject to reductions.

The Employee Relations Manager updated the Committee on these reviews and confirmed that three employees had been made redundant following the decommissioning of Shalder House, and that a counterproposal on the Waste Services review was due to be considered by the Regeneration, Community and Culture Departmental Management Team on 12 April 2012.

Members discussed the Balfour Centre proposals to which it was noted that there was interest in service provision from an alternative provider. Members also discussed the Better for Less phase 2 proposals whether the number of staff affected by phase 2 had been confirmed. Officers responded that this would be resolved at the Implementation Board meeting on 16 April 2012 followed by a meeting with the Unions later in the week.

Decision:

The Committee noted the present position and the support arrangements for staff.

Chairman

Date:

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