

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Employment Matters Committee**  
**Tuesday, 18 February 2014**  
**7.00pm to 7.35pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

- Present:** Councillors: Avey, Clarke, Christine Godwin, Paul Godwin, Irvine and Wicks (Chairman)
- Substitute:** Councillor:  
Turpin (Substitute for Mackinlay)
- In Attendance:** Elizabeth Benjamin, Senior Lawyer - Litigation  
Ralph Edwards, Head of HR  
Rosie Gunstone, Democratic Services Officer  
Carrie McKenzie, Head of Organisational Change  
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

**840 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 6 February 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**841 Apologies for absence**

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor Mackinlay.

**842 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**843 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

The Chairman, following the receipt of advice from the Monitoring Officer, declared a personal and potentially financial interest, on behalf of any officers

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present affected by the proposals, regarding agenda item 5 (Pay and Grade Review).

### 844 Pay and Grade Review

#### Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services introduced the report, which updated the Committee on the progress of the Pay and Grade Review Project and the collective dispute with the trade unions. The report confirmed that discussion at the Joint Consultative Committee held earlier on 18 February 2014 had constituted stage 3 (the final stage) of the Collective Dispute Procedure, although this had been disputed by the trade unions.

The trade unions' views from the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held earlier on 18 February 2014 in relation to the four recommendations set out in the report, were reported to the Committee. The trade unions' comments are shown in brackets against each of the recommendations set out below:

- (i) Note the position of the employer and the trade unions on the collective dispute and consider any proposals from the JCC (it was accepted that the trade unions were still in dispute with the Council)
- (ii) Note the trade unions pay claim and make a recommendation to full Council not to accept the pay claim (a request was received from the trade unions for this pay claim to be separated from the discussion on pay and grade and for further negotiations to take place between the trade unions and officers of the Council)
- (iii) Review the alternative proposals from the trade unions (a request was made that the alternative proposals should be debated at Employment Matters Committee)
- (iv) Confirm the proposal for a pause on the implementation of the pay progression scheme until the end of June to allow for further discussion and training of managers (while the pause was welcomed by the trade unions a request was made for the dismissal and re-engagement process to also be delayed until after the further discussion and training of managers has taken place)

The Committee considered the views of the trade unions and discussed the following issues.

Some Members queried the fact that, although there would be a pause before implementation of the new pay progression scheme to enable further discussions to take place and appropriate training given, it was still proposed to proceed with the dismissal and reengagement process by 1 April 2014. The

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view was expressed that it was unrealistic to expect staff to sign new contracts before the final details on pay progression had been finalised.

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, responded to questions from Members about the timescales attached to the discussions about the Pay and Grade Review including dismissal and reengagement of staff. She confirmed that a review of pay and grades had been initiated two years ago when incremental progression had been frozen. She explained that there had been a number of meetings with trade unions to discuss the implementation of the new Pay and Grade scheme. The formal consultation with the trade unions had been launched in October 2013. In law, 45 days had to be allowed for this process but it had been extended to 56 days following representations by the trade unions.

A Member asked if a decision on the pay claim had to be taken at this meeting. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, stated that when the collective agreement had been reached on Medway Council to come out of the national pay award in 2013, a process was agreed to determine local pay within the trade unions. This had not been followed because a pay claim had not been submitted by the trade unions at the appropriate time. Therefore, Members were advised that the matter had to be discussed at this meeting to that a recommendation could be forwarded to the budget Council meeting on 20 February 2014.

The Chairman concluded by stating the Council wished to maintain a dialogue with the trade unions on these issues and would always hope to reach a collective agreement.

### **Decision:**

- (a) The Committee noted the position of the employer and the trade unions on the collective dispute;
- (b) The Committee noted the trade unions' pay claim and that Full Council on 20 February 2014 be recommended not to accept the pay claim;
- (c) The Committee agreed to confirm the proposal for a pause on the implementation of the pay progression scheme until the end of June 2014 to allow for further discussion and training of managers.

(In accordance with 12.5, Chapter 4 – Rules of the Council's constitution, Councillors Christine and Paul Godwin requested that their votes against the decisions be recorded in the minutes).

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**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Rosie Gunstone, Democratic Services Officer**

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