

Joint Consultative Committee – 19 November 2014

Medway Council
Meeting of Joint Consultative Committee
Wednesday 19 November 2014
6.30pm to 6.50pm

Record of the meeting

Present:

Employer's Representatives

Councillor Avey
Councillor Mrs Diane Chambers
Councillor Clarke
Councillor Christine Godwin
Councillor Paul Godwin
Councillor Wicks (Chairman)

Employees' Representatives

Michael Barton, Voice the Union
Frank Macklin, GMB
Joe Parsons, UNISON

In attendance:

Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer
Carrie McKenzie, Head of HR and Organisational Change
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services
Tim Silver, Employee Relations Manager

6. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mackinlay, Claire Dent (Aspect) and Nicola Brocklesby (ATL).

7. Record of Meeting

The record of the meeting held on 3 September 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

8. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

There were none.

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9. Pay Negotiations

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services gave a verbal report on progress with the local pay and conditions negotiations. Tabled at the meeting were the minutes of the Local Pay and Conditions Negotiations meeting held on 21 October 2014 and also a timetable showing the various steps involved in the agreed protocol for the negotiations.

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services advised that a meeting had been held with the unions on 9 September where an update had been given on the budget and the Council's difficult financial situation. The trade unions had been asked to submit their pay claim by the end of October but this had subsequently been extended to mid November. A claim had not yet been submitted, although it was possible this may happen the following week.

A further meeting had been held on 21 October to discuss a possible pay claim. The Committee were advised that in light of the council's financial position it was likely any pay increase would be no greater than 1%, although this had not yet been agreed. The Council was prepared to negotiate on non-pay issues and also on the appropriate balance between the cost of living element of the pay award and the performance pay aspect. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services advised that the unions felt a higher proportion of the award should be allocated to the cost of living element. She also advised that if there was a 50/50 split between the two elements then employees at the top of the scale would receive more than 0.5% in terms of the performance element. Finally, the Committee were advised that the national pay award had now been agreed at 2.2% with effect from January 2015.

It was anticipated that an agreed negotiated position would be reported to this Committee and also the Employment Matters Committee in January. The latter would then make a recommendation to Council about the pay award.

The Chair emphasised the need for clarity as soon as possible about the unions' pay claim. A union representative asked the Council to consider agreeing to pay the living wage to all staff.

A Member noted that the Council was planning to introduce a Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme and asked for information about this. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services replied that it was essentially a car leasing scheme where employees would pay less tax and the Council less national insurance. At the end of the scheme the car would not belong to the employee. A report on this proposal was due to be considered by Cabinet.

Reference was made to the national pay award and officers were asked if any analysis had been carried out to establish how Medway staff

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compared to those on national conditions in the period from when the national pay freeze had started and taking into account the 2.2% award and whether this was affecting the Council's competitiveness in the employment market. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services advised that benchmarking information obtained about 18 months ago showed that staff at the mid point of the pay scale were in line with the market, those at the lower end were below the average rate and those at the top of the scale were above average. The Council continuously benchmarked certain types of jobs (such as social workers). No comparison had yet been made in terms of how pay rates compared in light of the 2.2% national pay award.

Decision:

The Joint Consultative Committee noted the verbal report and asked for the outcome of the pay negotiations to be reported to the next meeting

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Chairman

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Date

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