

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Employment Matters Committee**  
**Wednesday, 27 April 2016**  
**7.00pm to 7.33pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Avey, Fearn, Godwin, Saroy and Wicks (Chairman)

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Shaw (Substitute for Murray)

**In Attendance:** Estelle Bonney Andrews, Lawyer People Team  
Carrie McKenzie, Head of HR and Organisational Change  
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer  
Nicola Harris, HR Business Partner

**939 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Murray and Hicks.

**940 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 3 February 2016 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

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

There were none.

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

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

**943 Chairman's Announcement**

The Chairman commented that Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director – Organisational Development, had left the Council recently after 18 years of

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service. During this time Tricia's contribution to the Council, particularly on HR issues, had been considerable and he wished her well for the future.

### 944 Review of the Subsistence and Expenses Policy

#### **Discussion:**

Members considered a report which sought agreement to the revised Subsistence and Expenses Policy.

A Member asked whether there had been a pressing reason for the meeting to go ahead and queried whether it should have been cancelled. The Head of HR and Organisational Change advised that the review of the subsistence and expenses policy was scheduled to come to this meeting as part of a rolling programme of policy reviews and the trade unions had been notified it would be considered at this meeting. Also, Members had previously expressed a wish to be regularly updated on proposed reorganisations and, had the meeting not happened, there would have been a four month period between these issues being reported to Members.

In response to a question about the importance of itemised receipts for claims and how items purchased using contactless payment methods were dealt with, the Head HR of and Organisational Change advised that receipts were required for all claims and these were first checked by line managers before submission to HR for payment. Where contactless payment had been used, then a copy or screenshot of a bank statement verifying the purchase would be required.

A Member referred to paragraph 10.1 of the policy and asked for clarification of the phrase "employees who are required to work". The Head of HR and Organisational Change replied that this applied in circumstances where, for example, an employee was required to attend an evening meeting or attend a conference which entailed an overnight stay and did not apply to a normal working day where an employee decided to work longer hours.

Referring to the comments on car parking received from Unison and Prospect, a Member asked if there had been many issues reported to managers which would demonstrate whether this was a significant issue. The Head of HR and Organisational Change confirmed that no significant issues about car parking had been raised.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to:

- a) approve the revised Subsistence and Expenses Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and:
- b) review the Policy in two years time with any proposed changes referred to this Committee.

**945 Proposed reorganisations**

**Discussion:**

The Head of HR and Organisational Change introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on current and new organisational reviews and transfers, since the previous report in February 2016. It was confirmed that the Council made every effort to support staff during reorganisations through strong communication and the provision of Care First (a counselling and information service) and redeployment opportunities were provided to affected staff wherever possible.

A Member referred to the reorganisation regarding the Old Vicarage children's residential home and asked if any of the staff transferred back to the Council had been originally transferred from the Council in the first instance. He also asked for details of the financial implications of the reorganisation, if they were significant. The Head of HR and Organisational Change confirmed that some of the staff transferred back to the Council had been originally transferred out of the Council's employment but commented this was not unusual in this sector.

In response to a question about the timescales for consulting trade unions and employees about proposed reorganisations, the Head of HR and Organisational Change advised that the legal requirements had changed in 2015 and in cases where more than 20 staff were affected a maximum period of 45 days applied. HR recommended a minimum period of 30 days unless the reorganisations were significant.

Members also asked if details of new organisational structures and responsibilities (down to Head of Service level) could be sent to them after reorganisations had taken place.

**Decision:**

The Committee agreed to:

- a) note the present position and support arrangements for staff in relation to proposed reorganisations, and;
- b) ask that organisation charts showing functions, responsibilities and details of post holders (down to Head of Service level) be sent to Members following both the recent senior management restructuring and also future reorganisations.

**946 Equalities Working Group Update**

**Discussion:**

Members considered a report on the outcome of a recent meeting of the Equalities Working Group.

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Members congratulated officers for achieving, for the first time, a place in the top 100 of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2016. It was considered this reflected well on the Council and it was very positive that people wished to work for Medway Council, particularly given the significant changes and pressures facing the organisation.

Following a discussion about the membership of the Equalities Working Group, it was agreed that future reports would include details of attendees at meetings.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to:

- a) note the report, and;
- b) ask that reports from the Equalities Working Group to the Committee in future include details of attendees at the meetings.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer**

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