

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Wednesday, 1 February 2017
7.00pm to 8.25pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Godwin, Hicks, Steve Iles, Wicks (Chairman) and Williams
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Joy (Substitute for Avey)
Maple (Substitute for Khan)
- In Attendance:** Carrie McKenzie, Chief People Officer
Lawyer
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer
Tim Silver, Assistant Head of HR
Nicola Trainor, Assistant Head of HR
Solicitor

694 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Avey and Khan.

695 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 30 November 2016 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

696 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

697 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Maple declared an interest as he was a member of GMB.

698 Pay Negotiations 2017/2018

Discussion:

The Chief People Officer introduced the report which updated the Members on the pay negotiations process and provided a recommendation on the pay award for the financial year 2017/18. The report included an analysis of the MedPay PDR outcomes at April 2016 and also detailed one joint pay claim that had been made by Unison and GMB and the associated costs were included at sections 6 and 7 of the report. An alternative claim had been made by Unison in January 2017 and the detail of this and the associated estimated costs were set out at sections 8 and 9 of the report.

A Member then spoke in support of the alternative claim made by Unison (set out at section 8 of the report) and acknowledged the additional estimated cost of £78,000 that would be required to fund the two parts of this claim but felt that this should be delivered and was substantially less than the cost of the original joint claim. The member also referred to the request that had been raised by the trade unions at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) held earlier that evening, regarding the extension to the freeze of terms and conditions up to 2020. He supported this although suggested that the freeze be until April 2019 which would then coincide with the next local elections.

At the JCC meeting, there had been a discussion about the effectiveness of MedPay and performance related pay schemes generally. Some had the view that the scheme was not effective and did not generate positive morale amongst staff while others believed the scheme to be a motivational tool for staff. In reference to this, it was suggested by a Member that a review of the MedPay scheme should be held in time to inform the 2018/19 pay negotiations.

The Chief People Officer confirmed that in relation to the part 1 of the alternative claim (applying a 1% cost of living allowance (COLA) pay increase to all staff and not have any performance related pay), this would require a move away from the MedPay scheme which was used to determine performance related pay (PRP). In relation to part 2 of the alternative claim (giving an additional one day leave for staff at the top of their pay range), she explained that this would affect 342 individuals, would be for one year only and would be relatively easy to administer but could cause additional pressure to service.

In relation to the request about extending the freeze to changes to the terms and conditions (as detailed in the Green Book) the Chief People Officer confirmed this was possible should the Committee wish to accept this, however, she explained that this was an area she, as Chief People Officer, wanted to revisit as some of the allowances within the Green Book terms and conditions did not provide pay parity. She added that the freezing of these terms and conditions could be done at a later stage, after budget Council on 23 February 2017.

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Another Member suggested that budgetary implications from PRP awards should be funded separately from the £700,000 allocation which should be used to give all staff a COLA increase. He supported the suggestion of a review of the MedPay scheme and suggested that this should be carried out by a body that is independent of both the employer and employees.

The Committee then considered the following five proposals. On each proposals Councillors Godwin and Maple requested that their votes be recorded, in accordance with 12.6, Chapter 4 of Medway's Constitution.

Proposal 1 – that a 1% COLA pay increase is applied to all staff and that any performance related pay is removed. On being put to the vote this proposal was lost. Councillors Godwin and Maple voted in favour of the proposal.

Proposal 2 – that an additional one day's leave is provided for staff at the top of their pay range (and are therefore only eligible for the 0.6% COLA pay increase) for the leave year 2017/18. On being put to the vote this proposal was carried. Councillors Godwin and Maple voted in favour of the proposal.

Proposal 3 – that a freeze on terms and conditions (as detailed in the Green Book) be extended to March 2019. On being put to the vote this proposal was lost. Councillors Godwin and Maple voted in favour of the proposal.

Proposal 4 – that a review, independent of the employer and of trade unions, be carried out of MedPay before the commencement of the 2018/2019 pay negotiations. On being put to the vote this proposal was lost. Councillors Godwin and Maple voted in favour of the proposal.

It was then moved that the Committee recommend to full Council that £700k is allocated to pay rises and is distributed in accordance with paragraph 10.1 of the report (0.60% paid as a general COLA increase and 0.4% paid in accordance with the performance arrangements as detailed under MedPay). On being put to the vote this proposal was carried. Councillors Godwin and Maple voted against the proposal.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to recommend to full Council that:

- (1) £700k is allocated to pay rises and is distributed in accordance with paragraph 10.1 of the report (0.60% paid as a general COLA increase and 0.4% paid in accordance with the performance arrangements as detailed under MedPay)
- (2) staff who are at the top of their pay range (therefore only eligible to receive the 0.60% COLA element) are given an additional one day's leave for the leave year 2017/18.

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699 Pay Policy Statement 2017/2018

Discussion:

The Assistant Head of HR introduced the report which provided the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2017/2018 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

A Member suggested that the correct job titles for the statutory posts of Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer should be included in the statement, which officers undertook to include.

Another member asked how the pay multiplier for the Council and the Hutton report measure (detailed at 3.5.1 (iv) of the report) compared to other local authorities. Officers undertook to bring the comparisons to the next meeting of the Committee, once all local authorities had published their pay policy statements.

Decision:

The Committee noted the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18, as set out in Appendix One to the report and referred it to full Council for agreement.

700 Staff Survey

Discussion:

The Chief People Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with a breakdown of the 2016 staff survey as a summary of results which were set out at Appendix 1 to the report. She explained that the response rate had increased by 3% compared with the previous year's figures. She added that engagement forums had been set up within Adult Social Care and Finance Teams which were to encourage open dialogue with staff and there was an intention to set up more engagement forums around the Council. In addition it was explained that the survey had been altered to enable benchmarking comparisons to take place in the future.

Members then raised a number of points and questions, which included: -

- **Differences in response rates by directorate** – The Chief People Officer explained that one aspect of the large variance across the directorates was due to the quantum of staff within each directorate. Another factor had been engagement with satellite locations and although there had been some work in engaging with staff that were not within Gun Wharf, more of this was needed in the future.
- **Percentage of people feeling they were able to access the right learning and development opportunities when they need to** – disappointment was raised by Members on this percentage which had been reported as 64%. The Chief People Officer also expressed her

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concern regarding this result. She explained that had there been a higher response rate from staff within the Children and Adult Directorate then she would have expected this figure to rise, particular in relation to Social Workers as there is now a high level of support for Social Workers, aided by the Social Work Academy which was now in place at the Council.

- **No data relating to relationships with trade unions** – commenting on the data obtained from the survey in relation to Medway Makers, it was asked whether there should be similar data obtained about trade unions, which the Chief People Officer undertook to consider.
- **Percentage of people reported to have experienced harassment or bullying** – concern was raised that 12% of respondents reported to have experienced bullying or harassment at work in the past year. This concern was again shared with the Chief People Officer who explained that this had been an area of concern for the Corporate Management Team who were looking carefully at this issue and how it can be addressed through improved communication and training courses for managers and staff. It was confirmed that the data received could be assessed in more detail to identify specific directorates and teams within the Council where this was a particular issue so that targeted work in those areas could take place.
- **Discrepancy of declarations by staff about disability** – a Member asked if there was any analysis with regard to the number of staff that had reported to have a disability via the survey, which was much higher than the number of staff that had formally declared their disability via selfserve4you. The Chief People Officer explained that there were two primary factors, one being people not updating their information on selfserve4you, particularly if they have developed a disability since being employed by the Council or since the classing of a disability had changed nationally and others consciously choose not to declare their disability to the employer. A great deal of work was done in terms of publicising the support available to staff with a disability through the Disabled Workers Forum, which continued to be proactive.
- **Percentage of staff believing that senior managers will take action on the results of the survey** – a Member commented that more needed to be done to improve the result against this point, which had been reported as 25% of staff. The Chief People Officer explained that the engagement forums were one tool, running with a 'you said, we did' ethos in providing a two way dialogue and feedback tool between staff and senior managers.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and requested that the results of the annual staff survey are reported annually to the Employment Matters Committee.

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701 Apprenticeship Data

Discussion:

The Assistant Head of HR introduced the report which provided a breakdown of the numbers, age and gender profile of the current cohort of apprentices employed by the Council, as requested by the Committee at its previous meeting.

In response to a question about whether mature apprentices had been employed previously and would be employed in the future, officers explained that historically there had been a perception that apprenticeship programmes were for younger people and therefore there had not been any older people employed under the apprenticeship scheme previously. However, it was added that the Apprenticeship Academy had been launched the previous week, which would help increase the number of apprentices employed by the Council and would also widen the opportunities to people of various ages and levels of experience.

In response to a question about funding for apprenticeships, officers explained that there was an Apprenticeship Levy which was held by Central Government for the local authority to access to support the apprenticeship workforce. The Apprenticeship Levy for Medway Council was still to be finalised.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and agreed that an updated report be provided to the Committee in October 2017 which would provide details of the annual review of the Apprenticeship Training Allowance.

702 Early Retirement and Severance Payments

Discussion:

The Chief People Officer introduced the report which report to Members decisions taken in relation to early retirement and severance payments for the period 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Chairman

Date:

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