

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Wednesday, 14 June 2017
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: Wicks (Chairman), Avey, Hicks, Khan, Steve Iles and Williams
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Shaw (Substitute for Godwin)
- In Attendance:** Carrie McKenzie, Chief People Officer
Tim Silver, Assistant Head of HR
Nicola Trainor, Assistant Head of HR
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor

52 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Godwin.

53 Record of meetings

The records of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2017 and the meeting of the Joint Meeting of Committees held on 17 May 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

54 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

55 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Khan disclosed that she was a member of the GMB trade union.

56 Report on the Results of the MedPay Progression Award Scheme 2016/2017

Discussion:

Members considered a report on the results of the Council's MedPay Pay Progression Award Scheme for the 2016/2017 reporting year.

The Chief People Officer advised that the 461 employees classed as "other" did not represent the final figure. About 300-350 of this group included staff who had not yet met the qualifying service criteria or who had been with the Council for more than 6 months but had transferred to a new role and had not met the qualifying service criteria. The final figure was likely to be similar to the 2015/16 figure of 90.

In response to a question from a Member about the ease of implementing the new PDR Assessment Levels, the Chief People Officer advised that managers had been trained on the new levels including the differences between Level 1A and 1B. In addition assessments made by managers were then moderated to ensure consistency across the Council.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

57 Stonewall Work Equality Index 2017

Discussion:

Members considered a report on the results of the Stonewall Employers Workplace Equality Index 2017.

The Council's overall ranking was 106 from a participant pool of 439. Whilst it was disappointing to fall outside of the Top 100 the participant pool was greater and the actual points scored were greater than previous years. Members welcomed the Council's ranking in the Local Government Sector of 10 from a participant pool of 43.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief People Officer commented that Stonewall gave feedback to the Council via workshops where improvements that could be made were discussed. As a result the Council had developed an action plan.

A Member asked about relations between the Council and the LGBTQ community. The Chief People Officer considered the relationship to be a very positive one. In her time with the Council there had been no claims against the authority for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The staff LGBTQ Forum met on a quarterly basis and reported to the Equalities and Access Group chaired by a Director.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

58 Gender Pay Gap

Discussion:

Members considered a report which dealt with the statutory requirement placed on all employers with more than 250 employees to report annually on their Gender Pay Gap and also described how the Council intended to fulfil its statutory duty.

A Member welcomed this initiative and asked if the Council had any idea what the result of the assessment would look like. The Committee was advised that the assessment had not yet started but the Council's job evaluation scheme was gender neutral as it was the post that was evaluated and not the person.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

59 Personal Service Companies (IR35) and Holders of Office

Discussion:

Members considered a report which detailed changes to the way that a worker operating within the public sector through an intermediary (Personal Service Company (PSC)) was required to make PAYE and NI payments. The report gave the background to these changes, the implications for a worker captured by the changes and how the Council had implemented these statutory changes.

Members were advised that the Council had planned for these changes and was more advanced in implementing them than most. 63 assessments had been made to date which had involved a significant amount of work and time for HR, including dealing with queries and concerns from people affected by the new rules.

The processes to implement the legislation would be subject to an internal audit. The Chief People Officer was confident the audit would not highlight any significant issues. In response to a request from a Member, it was agreed that the outcome of the audit would be reported to the Committee.

Members asked that their thanks to the HR team for their work in implementing the changes be placed on record.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

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- a) note the report;
- b) ask that the outcome of the internal audit into the processes put in place to implement the new legislation be reported to a future meeting of the Committee, and
- c) thank all those HR staff who had worked to implement the changes.

60 Organisational Change

Discussion:

Members considered a report which dealt with new reviews and transfers since the last report on 30 November 2016.

Referring to paragraph 4.28 (Transformation of Early Help Services), a Member stated that she understood a staff consultation meeting had taken place the previous day which had resulted in a collective grievance being submitted by GMB. She continued that some staff had considered that the presentation had been heavily weighted in favour of the preferred option giving the impression that the final decision had already been taken. The Chief People Officer expressed her surprise at the trade unions' position that consultation with staff was taking place at the same time as public consultation. The Council was required to consult in a meaningful way which meant the views of staff needed to be sought before Cabinet took a final decision. This was in line with the normal process followed by the Council when consulting on organisational change. The consultation document made it clear that there were three options.

A Member asked for an update on shared services with Gravesham Borough Council and also what options staff had to give feedback or express grievances during re-organisations. The Chief People Officer advised that HR had been providing a payroll service for Gravesham Borough Council since 1 April 2017 and the Borough Council was very pleased with the service provided. The Council was facing many significant organisational changes but was good at redeploying affected staff and minimising the number of redundancies, with the latter seen as the last option. The number of grievances submitted about organisational changes was small and there had been no noticeable increase in the use of support arrangements available to staff such as the Care First counselling service.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the present position and the support arrangements for staff.

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61 Early Retirements and Severance Payments

Discussion:

Members considered a report which detailed decisions taken in relation to early retirement and severance payments for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 April 2017.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

62 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Decision:

The Committee agreed to exclude the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt material relating to agenda item 10 because consideration of these matters in public would disclose information falling within Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 11, and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Chairman

Date:

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