

Medway Council
EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

10 February 2010
7:00 pm to 7:55 pm

RECORD OF THE MEETING

PRESENT:

Committee members: Councillors Avey, Kenneth Bamber, Carr
(Chairman) and Ruparel

Substitute members: Councillor Brake (for Councillor Andrews)
Councillor Godwin (for Councillor Maple)

In attendance: Elizabeth Benjamin (Senior Lawyer - Litigation)
Paula Charker (Head of HR Services)
Ralph Edwards (Head of HR Schools)
Sandy Eldridge (Advice and Consultancy Manager)
Wayne Hemingway (Cabinet Co-ordinator)
Richard Lynn (Head of Workforce Planning and
Development)
Tricia Palmer (Assistant Director, Organisational
Services)
Teri Williams (Change Project Manager)

587 RECORD OF THE MEETING

The record of the meeting held on 13 October 2009 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

588 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews, Maple and Shaw.

589 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

590 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION FRAMEWORK/UPDATED REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out a number of proposed revisions to the Recruitment and Selection Framework and consequential changes to the Redeployment Policy. The revised Recruitment and Selection Framework reflected the Council's four workforce priority areas as agreed by the Committee in September 2009 and the report provided details of the six proposed changes to the policy, namely, changes to the recruitment cycle, changes to the redeployment process, the advertisement of posts, removal of the application form, changes to the job description, references and removal of pre-employment health checks.

Members discussed a number of issues including the increased use of e-recruitment, the removal of the application form from the application process, job advertisements and HR Resources' support of the new process.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to the adoption of the revised Recruitment and Selection Framework, as set out in appendix A to the report, and the Redeployment Policy, as set out in appendix B to the report, to enable the workforce priorities set out in the report to be met subject to the following:

- (a) that the proposal to remove the application form from the job application process be clarified with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to ensure there are no equalities implications; and
- (b) that a review of the Recruitment and Selection Framework/Updated Redeployment Policy be brought back to Committee in twelve months' time.

591 REGISTRATION COSTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out an update on the funding the costs of Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registration. The Committee originally agreed the implementation of the ISA Vetting and Barring Scheme in September 2009 subject to further research on the funding issue.

The report provided details of the research undertaken by the South East Employers' Organisation on the Council's behalf, unfortunately the response rate was not high and a number of Councils had not, at the time of report publication, made a decision on whether to pay the additional costs. The report set out the projected costs of the scheme, should the Council decide to pay the costs.

Members discussed the additional costs of the scheme in the context of the type of staff affected and the Council's budgetary position.

Decision:

The Committee did not support the principle that the Council should pay the additional £28 per registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and this will become the responsibility of staff and new recruits.

592 EXCESS TRAVEL POLICY

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out a review of the Council's Excess Travel Policy. This followed the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee's (JCNC) consideration of a collective grievance from a number of employees in relation to both car parking issues and excess travel payments under the National Agreement on pay and conditions of service for Local Government employees. The JCNC agreed that a review of the Excess Travel Policy be submitted to the Employment Matters Committee. The report set out the basis for proposing a revised policy for consideration.

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Members discussed a number of issues including whether all staff contracts included mobility clauses, the clause in the proposed policy regarding exceptional circumstances and additional car parking charges for redeployed staff.

Decision:

The Committee agreed the revised Excess Travel Policy, as set out in appendix 5 to the report subject to the deletion of the section 1.1.1 (b) from the policy.

The Committee asked officers to consider the issue of car parking charges for redeployed staff.

593 TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME - MEDWAY DISCRETION

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out details of changes in the teachers' pensions regulations which meant that a decision previously made by Employment Matters Committee in July 2009 could no longer be applied. It was noted that the Teachers Pensions etc (Reform Amendments) Regulations 2006 would, from 6 April 2010, only allow employers to award premature retirement benefits to scheme members who had attained the age of 55 with the exception of those taking ill-health retirement. Unfortunately, this meant the decision made by the Committee to provide an exception to enable staff made redundant by the closure of New Brompton College, Medway Community College and Chatham South Schools could no longer be applied.

Decision:

The Committee reaffirmed Medway exercising its discretion under the teachers' pensions regulations to award premature retirement benefits to scheme members who have attained the age of 55 on the date the pensionable employment terminates and noted that it is unable to apply transitional arrangements based on the previous rules for teachers at Chatham South School, Medway Community College and New Brompton College.

594 WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out an update on key actions to enhance workforce planning and development across the Council, following a request from the Committee. It was noted that the workforce planning arrangements were assessed as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment from 2009/2010 onwards.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

595 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Discussion:

Decision:

The Committee agreed to exclude the press and public for the consideration of agenda item 5E (Early retirements and severance payments) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

596 EARLY RETIREMENT AND SEVERANCE PAYMENTS REPORT

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out information on early retirements and severance decisions between July 2009 – November 2009.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

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Chairman

Date

Wayne Hemingway

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