

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Employment Matters Committee**  
**Wednesday, 30 January 2019**  
**7.00pm to 7.55pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

- Present:** Councillors: Wicks (Chairman), Hicks, Mrs Josie Iles, Steve Iles and Khan
- Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Griffin (Substitute for Williams)  
Maple (Substitute for Godwin)
- In Attendance:** Wayne Hemingway, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Carrie McKenzie, Assistant Director - Transformation  
Vicky Nutley, Assistant Head of Legal Services  
Tim Silver, Acting Head of HR Services

**758 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Godwin and Williams.

**759 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2018 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

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

There were none.

**761 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

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### Other interests

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

Councillor Maple disclosed that he was a member of the GMB trade union.

The Assistant Director, Transformation declared an interest on behalf of those officers present at the meeting who would be affected by the proposals set out in agenda item 5 (Pay Negotiations 2019/20).

### **762 Pay negotiations 2019/20**

#### **Discussion:**

Members considered a report on the progress of the pay negotiations with the Trade Unions for the financial year 2019/2020.

The joint pay claim from the Trade Unions (TUs) consisted of three elements:

- a 5% increase on all pay points.
- the deletion of all pay points below the Foundation Living Wage 2019/2020 OR £9 per hour (NJC minimum wage), whichever was the higher.
- a return to National Pay Bargaining.

The Council's pay offer to the TUs was:

- 0.60% paid as a general cost of living increase;
- 0.40% paid in accordance with the performance arrangements as detailed under MedPay.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the proposals as set out in Appendix 7 to the report.

The Assistant Director, Transformation referred to the pay negotiations protocol as set out in paragraph 3 of the report and stated, with regards to Action 6 (meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 30 January 2019), that no representatives from Unison or GMB had attended this meeting (Unison had given apologies for this meeting owing to unforeseen circumstances and GMB had been contacted on a number of occasions prior to the meeting to confirm their attendance). Therefore, it had not been possible to discuss the pay negotiations at the JCC meeting.

A Member commented that the Council's proposed pay award did not go far enough with regards to increasing pay for low paid staff when some employees were using foodbanks and also taking into account the increase in cost of living which was higher than the proposed pay increase. It was also suggested that the non-attendance of Unison and GMB at the JCC meeting earlier the same evening may reflect frustrations about pay negotiations.

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A Member commented that the focus of the pay claim should be to increase very low salaries and that the increase in Council Tax and the cost of living would both exceed the proposed pay award. The Member welcomed the review of MedPay which would be discussed later in the meeting. The Member questioned the effectiveness of the pay negotiations protocol when the Council's pay offer remained unchanged through the process and that there needed to be meaningful negotiations on the pay award.

The Assistant Director, Transformation stated that the trade unions were actively encouraged to make proposals around the total rewards package, for example, flexible working and annual leave. In addition, the Medium Term Financial Strategy provided a sum for the proposed pay award which officers were required to work within.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to recommend the following to full Council:

- a) that £841,800 is allocated for pay awards and that this is distributed in accordance with paragraph 8.2 of the report, and;
- b) to delegate to the Assistant Director, Transformation the authority to agree the competency based awards for staff assessed under MedPay at Levels 1A, 1B and 2.

In accordance with Council Rule 12.6 Councillors Khan and Maple asked that their votes against both the decisions be recorded.

## **763 Pay Policy Statement 2019/20**

### **Discussion:**

Members considered a report regarding the Pay Policy Statement (PPS) for the financial year 2019/2020, for referral to Full Council for agreement.

A Member asked whether a reference to the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer in the PPS could be amended to reflect the job titles of those officers, specifically the Chief Legal Officer and Chief Finance Officer. It was clarified that both the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer were statutory roles and needed to be referenced as such in the PPS, however, the job titles would be added in brackets to the PPS as appropriate.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the PPS, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the Pay Policy Statement 2019/2020, as set out in Appendix One to the report, and agreed to refer it to Full Council for agreement.

## 764 Review of Medpay

### Discussion:

Members considered a paper regarding a review of the Council's current performance pay arrangements (known as MedPay), including the scope and method of the review.

The Assistant Director, Transformation provided details of the consultation undertaken with trade unions (Unison and GMB) in relation to the proposed scope of the independent review, the outcome of which was reflected in section 3 of the report. She also stated that the review would take an estimated 20 working days to undertake with a budget requirement of between £20,000 to £25,000.

A Member welcomed the review being taken forward and asked that gender split be included when the review considered the following matter: "Is the overall distribution of MedPay monitored to ensure that it is sufficiently equality proofed?"

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Transformation confirmed that the independent review could be delivered within the budget as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report but would be subject to the Council's procurement rules as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Transformation stated that whilst no formal review of Medpay had previously been undertaken, it had been subject to an internal review by HR each year to refine and improve the scheme and that the trade unions had been made aware of this work, for example, at the Corporate Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings. She also stated that whilst some of the proposed areas for the scope of the review detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report had been previously considered by HR, they had not been subject to an independent review.

A Member questioned whether it was necessary for the final two bullet points of paragraph 3.1 to be included in an independent review (as they could potentially be considered by HR).

A Member commented that the independent review of the scheme looked expensive and would not represent value for money and another Member questioned whether the Cabinet would be minded to provide funding for the independent review given the estimated costs.

### Decision:

The Committee agreed not proceed with the Independent Review of Medpay.

In accordance with Council Rule 12.6 Councillors Khan and Maple asked that their votes against the decision be recorded.

**765 Gender Pay Gap**

**Discussion:**

Members considered a report setting out the results of the annual report on the Council's gender pay gap, as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

The Acting Head of HR referred Members to the comparator table at paragraph 6.4 of the report and the impact of the reduction in the workforce on the pay gap as set out in paragraph 7.1 of the report. He also explained that it was necessary to understand the background the widening gap citing the reduction of 220 staff (compared to the 2018 report) with this cohort consisting of 60% females together with a higher proportion of females working in the lower Medpay ranges.

Some Members expressed disappointment that the gender pay gap had widened, which they felt may put the Council at risk around equal pay and were concerned that it would be difficult to drill down further to find out why the gap had increased without a review of Medpay. These Members also asked what steps would be taken to address the widening gap, to which the Acting Head of HR stated he would need detailed background information to make recommendations on this matter.

It was then moved that the Committee note its disappointment in respect of the direction of the figures this year and that for next year the report includes details of what steps the Council has taken to address the pay gender gap.

The proposal was put to the vote and was lost.

**Decision:**

The Committee agreed to note the content of this report.

In accordance with Council Rule 12.6 Councillors Khan and Maple asked that their votes against the decision be recorded.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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