

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Tuesday, 1 June 2021
7.00pm to 7.24pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Fearn (Chairman), Hackwell, Khan, Mahil, Prenter and Thompson
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Barrett (Substitute for Carr)
- In Attendance:** Mark Parker, Legal Services
Nicola Smith, Deputy Head of HR (Strategy)
Nicola Trainor, Deputy Head of HR (Operations)
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer

30 Election of Chairman

Councillor Fearn was elected Chairman for the 2021/22 municipal year.

31 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Carr.

32 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 January 2021 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

34 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

Councillors Khan and Mahil disclosed that they were members of the GMB.

Councillor Prenter disclosed that he was a member of ASLEF.

Councillor Hackwell disclosed that his wife worked on a part time basis for the Adult Education service in Medway.

35 Establishment of the Employment Matters Appeals Panel

Discussion:

Members considered a report regarding the establishment of the Employment Matters Appeals Panel.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) agreed to the establishment of the Employment Matters Appeals Panel comprising 3 Members of this Committee and allocated 2 seats to the Conservative Group and 1 seat to the Labour and Co-operative Group;
- b) appointed Councillors Fearn, Hackwell and Mahil to the Panel.

36 Organisational Change

Discussion:

Members considered a report which detailed new reorganisations of services and transfers under the TUPE regulations for the period 1 November 2020 to 31 March 2021 and also on-going reviews that had previously been reported to the Committee but not yet concluded.

The possibility of future reports showing the net staffing figures resulting from organisational change was suggested and also whether team organisational charts could be included. Members were advised information on net changes would need to be gathered. Often organisational changes led to redeployment within the service, which was not recorded. The deletion of vacant posts or redundancies would lead to a net change.

With regard to the involvement of the Trade Unions in the possible shared service arrangement for a GIS Service with Gravesham Borough Council, Members were advised that as soon as there was a formal proposal this would be presented to staff and Trade Unions.

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With regard to the review of the HR services operating model, it was clarified that the purpose was to reform the service and streamline processes in order that better management information could be provided.

The level of support to staff subject to change was queried and whether the Council provided access to interviewing and CV writing training, given many employees may not have had to attend a job interview in many years. The Deputy Head of HR (Operations) confirmed this support was available and it was signposted to staff.

Reference was made to the review of the Community Resource Centre, 147 Nelson Road and the Community Support Outreach Team and it was queried whether some staff were now working at both sites and also whether there had been any redundancies. Members were advised this detail was not available but there would be full consultation with staff on any changes.

In terms of staff being made aware of their trade union representatives, Members were advised that HR met regularly with the Trade Unions and relationships were good. Trade Unions were always informed of any formal consultations with staff and the latter were made aware this information was shared with the Trade Unions and encouraged to seek support from their representative.

How well the Care First service was made known to staff and whether HR received any feedback on issues raised was queried. The Deputy Head of HR (Operations) advised that Care First, the Council's employee assistance provider, provided regular reports on usage rates. The Council was a high user of this service and had received excellent support during the pandemic. How to better promote Care First would be looked at and the monthly HR newsletter to staff could be used for this purpose.

The outcome of the decision made at Council in February 2021 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive how to allocate the 2021/22 pay award was queried. It was agreed a briefing note would be provided for Members and it was clarified that any staff subject to formal capability procedures would not receive a pay rise.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to:

- a) note the present position and the support arrangements for staff;
- b) receive reports on organisational change bi-annually in line with the Early Retirement and Redundancy report;
- c) request a briefing note on the allocation of the 2021/22 pay award.

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37 Early Retirement and Redundancy Payments

Discussion:

Members considered a report setting out all decisions taken in relation to early retirements and severance payments for the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report.

Chairman

Date:

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