

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Wednesday, 2 February 2022
7.00pm to 7.45pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Fearn (Chairman), Carr, Mahil, Prenter, Thompson, Thorne and Van Dyke

Substitutes: None

In Attendance: Sam Beck-Farley, Head of Human Resources
Nicola Trainor, Deputy Head of Human Resources
Michael Turner, Democratic Services Officer

653 Apologies for absence

There were none.

654 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 November 2021 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

655 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

656 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Maple disclosed that he was a member of the GMB Trade Union.

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Councillor Prenter disclosed that he was a member of the ASLEF Trade Union.

Councillor Van Dyke disclosed that she was a member of the Unite trade Union and received a pension from Unison.

657 Pay Negotiations 2022/23

Discussion

Members considered a report regarding progress of the pay negotiations for the financial year 2022/2023.

The joint TU pay claim for 2022/2023 is as follows:

- A 7.5% increase on all pay bands
- The deletion of all pay points below £10 per hour
- A return to NJC national bargaining power

Some Members made the point that whilst the financial pressures the Council was under were acknowledged, the 1% increase offer against a 7.5% national rate of inflation was disappointing and inadequate, in particular for staff on the lowest pay grades.

It was suggested that Cabinet should increase the amount set aside for pay in the draft budget and also that the lowest paid staff should receive a higher proportion of the allocated pay award. There was concern that the pay award could have a detrimental effect on staff retention as well as future recruitment and it was suggested that other non-pay benefits be explored.

The Head of HR informed the Committee that extensive discussions had taken place with the Unions and that the pay award was due to be decided at the next Budget Council. Members were being asked to recommend to Council the pay allocation award.

The Head of HR commented that there were some disparities between Ranges 1 and 2 and there was a commitment to investigate this further, as part of the review of MedPay and bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee . The Council had been actively working alongside partners to establish what else could be done to assist staff through methods such as savings clubs and other employee benefits. The comments and suggestion made would be explored alongside the work with Trade Unions on making Medway a better place to work and an employer of choice

It was proposed that the Committee recommend to Full Council that £1,096,000 be allocated for pay awards.

In accordance with Rule 12.4 of the Council Rules, a recorded vote on this proposal was taken.

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For – Councillors Carr, Fearn, Thompson and Thorne

Against – Councillors Mahil, Prenter and Van-Dyke

The Chairman declared that the proposal had been approved.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to recommend that Council:

- a) allocate £1,090,850 for pay awards.
- b) delegate to the Head of Paid Service the authority to agree the competency-based awards for staff assessed under MedPay at Levels 1A, 1B and 2.
- c) consider how the pay award can be distributed so that lower paid staff receive a higher proportion of the award, including achieving this through the exercise of the above-mentioned delegation.

658 Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023

Discussion:

Members considered a report regarding the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2022/2023 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and were requested to refer it to Full Council for agreement.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and refer it to Full Council for agreement.

659 Gender Pay Gap

Members considered a report on the gender pay gap which provided an update between September 2020 to date, ahead of the publishing the figures for 2019/20 on the Council's public website by 31 March 2021 and on the Government dedicated Gender pay gap reporting website.

The Deputy Head of HR advised that due to the pressures caused by the pandemic, progress remained slow and was affected by priorities of Covid recovery.

The way the report was written, and figures presented were commended and it was requested that figures on staff retention be presented in a similar way. The Head of HR agreed to take this as an action point to report back to the Committee on.

Members raised concerns about the reluctance of staff to provide data and requested that officers explored various methods to encourage staff to provide information that would be crucial in driving forward change. The Head of HR

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agreed on the importance of receiving information from staff and the significance of the ability to analyse the data. The challenge was to instil trust and confidence in employees to share information and they would continue to do this by actively explaining to staff why the data was needed and demonstrate what action were being taken because of the information shared.

Decision:

The Committee agreed to note the report

Chairman

Date:

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