

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Employment Matters Committee**  
**Tuesday, 2 November 2010**  
**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: Avey, Kenneth Bamber, Carr (Chairman),  
Tony Goulden, Mackinlay, Maple and Ruparel

**In Attendance:** Paula Charker, Head of HR Services  
Angela Drum, Head of Legal Services  
Ralph Edwards, Head of HR Services (Schools)  
Sandy Eldridge, Advice and Consultancy Manager  
Wayne Hemingway, Cabinet Coordinator  
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

**470 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 16 September 2010 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**471 Apologies for absence**

There were none.

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

There were none.

**473 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Carr declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because he is a Local Authority Governor at Rivermead School and Chatham Grammar School for Boys and retained his right to speak and vote on the items.

Councillor Tony Goulden declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because he is a Local Authority Governor at Luton Junior School and is a member of UNITE (Trade Union) and retained his right to speak and vote on the items.

Councillor Maple declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because he is a Trade Union employee (GMB) and retained his right to speak and vote on the items.

#### 474 Revised Organisational Change Policy

##### **Discussion:**

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out the proposed revised Organisational Change Policy. The Policy provided a framework for dealing with organisational change, including the statutory requirements for undertaking dismissals on the grounds of redundancy and other major organisational changes. Managers' guidance was also included which would sit alongside the policy, the aim of which was to provide a more flexible approach on managing organisational change with an emphasis on reaching a mutual agreement wherever possible.

The main changes to the policy were set out in paragraph 3 of the report including an amendment to the existing rule that employees leaving the Council owing to redundancy or efficiency would not be able to return to the Council's employment within 6 months of the date of termination and the reduction of the job matching ratio from 75% to 70%.

The report also provided details of the consultation process including the Council's response to specific comments. It was noted that the Redeployment Procedure would need to be amended in light of the proposal to change the rules around time off for interviews.

Members discussed a number of issues including the reengagement/redeployment of staff, flexibility around the four week trial period (in redeployment cases), and the reduction in the job matching ratio.

Tania Earnshaw (UNISON) was invited to comment on the proposals.

##### **Decision:**

- (a) The Committee agreed to the implementation of the revised Organisational Change Policy and supporting managers guidance including:
  - (i) the amendment to the existing rule regarding employees who had left the authority due to redundancy returning;
  - (ii) the reduction of the job matching percentage from 75% to 70%.
- (b) The Committee agreed to the amendment to the Redeployment Procedure on time off for interviews, as set out in paragraph 4.2 (k) of the report.
- (c) The Committee agreed that officers should extend the trial period (section 17 of the policy) to provide greater flexibility as necessary.

**475 Proposal to Freeze Increments**

**Discussion:**

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which updated Members on the proposal to freeze staff increments and the consultation process with Trade Unions and staff. The Cabinet agreed to begin consultation with employees and trade unions regarding the proposal to freeze staff increments on 28 September 2010. The Joint Consultative Committee considered the proposal on 18 October 2010 and the minutes from that meeting were set out at appendix 5 to the report.

The report set out the proposal in detail noting that the consultation period would end on 13 January 2011. The Employment Matters Committee would consider the outcome of consultation on 3 February 2011 with a final decision being made by Council on 24 February 2011 as part of the budget setting process. The Assistant Director confirmed that it was matter for Schools and their Governing Bodies as to whether their staff would be included in the proposals and that, currently, schools had indicated that they would not be taking the proposal forward. She also stated that some preliminary work had been undertaken on the proposals in terms of the impact on employees on low pay.

Members discussed a number of issues including the discussion of the proposal at the Joint Consultative Committee on 18 October 2010, whether the savings of £1.5m from this proposal would prevent a reduction of 50 jobs, and the impact of the proposals on low paid staff. The Assistant Director confirmed that the savings would arise on the revenue budget, the vast proportion of which was used to pay staff salaries.

Tania Earnshaw (UNISON) and Michael Barton (Voice) were invited to comment on the proposals.

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the details of the proposal and the consultation process for staff and Trade Unions.

**476 Budget Proposals and Implications for Staff**

**Discussion:**

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which covered the staffing issues in relation to the current in-year budget reductions and outlined progress since the last Committee meeting in September 2010.

It was noted that there were two further areas of the Council where there was a possibility, namely, ContactPoint and Medway Renaissance, details of which were set out in paragraph 6 of the report. The Head of HR Services confirmed

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that a counter-proposal from ContactPoint staff had not been accepted and that there were 2 employees at risk of redundancy.

Members discussed a number of issues including a request for the number of managers attending support sessions to the next meeting, the possibility of double counting staff attending support sessions, and efforts made to find alternative funding for services prior to making a decision to place staff at risk of redundancy.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the present position and the support arrangements for staff.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Wayne Hemingway, Cabinet Co-ordinator**

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