

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Tuesday, 31 May 2022
7.00pm to 7.18pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Fearn (Chairman), Carr, Mahil, Thompson, Thorne and Van Dyke
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Edwards (Substitute for Prenter)
- In Attendance:** Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Nicola Smith, Deputy Head of HR (Strategy)

13 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Prenter.

14 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 27 April 2022 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the correction of the spelling of Councillor Fearn under minute no. 851.

The record of the Joint Meeting of Committees held on 18 May 2022 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

16 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 Edwards disclosed that she was a member of the Unite Trade Union.

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

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

17 Menopause Guidance

Discussion:

Members considered a report which set out some newly developed guidance for managers to enable them to better support those employees going through the menopause. The Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised the Committee that 75% of the Council's workforce were female, of which 62% were aged over 40, therefore the introduction of this guidance was very pertinent.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments which included:

Effectiveness of the guidance – a Member commented that this guidance was welcomed, however, it would be important to see how it worked in practice. In response to a question on the monitoring of the guidance, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised that the effectiveness of the menopause guidance would be measured through staff surveys and 1:1s.

Workplace initiatives to support the guidance – in response to a question on whether there would be any initiatives to support the introduction of the guidance, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised the Committee that there were initiatives such as the Medway Makers to support staff. She also referred to the issue currently being in the national spotlight which would help give more emphasis to the guidance. In response to a question relating to a scenario where a female member of staff may not be comfortable in approaching their male line manager for support, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised that staff could contact HR instead.

Review of existing policies – in response to a question regarding the LGA guidance which recommended that policies should be reviewed, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised that such a review had been undertaken prior to the introduction of the guidance.

Policy development – in response to questions on whether there could be a Menopause Policy, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised the Committee that whilst a Policy could be considered to be restrictive, given that information and best practice was emerging, the guidance would currently support other existing policies, but there remained a possibility that a Policy Statement could be developed in the future.

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Decision:

The Committee noted the report and the guidance documents as set out in appendices 1-3 to the report.

18 Climate Response Volunteering

Discussion:

Members considered a report which provided details of the introduction of Climate Response Volunteering for employees.

A Member commented that this was an excellent idea and it would be good for community bonding and that other employers should also introduce this initiative.

Decision:

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

19 Electric Car Mileage Rate

Discussion:

Members considered a report which sought to revise the mileage rates for those employees using electric cars for work purposes, following an initial decision in 2020 to set the rates.

A Member commented that they supported this initiative given that it would help to assist with climate change and in response to a question on the Medpay Review, the Deputy Head of HR (Strategy) advised the Committee that there was no update at the moment, however, HR was currently going through a restructure, the outcome of which would assist with undertaking the review.

Decision:

The Committee agreed the adoption of Option 2 as set out in 3.2 of the report.

Chairman

Date:

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