

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Wednesday, 31 August 2022
7.00pm to 7.35pm

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: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Selina Bullivant, Learning and Development Manager
Stephanie Davis, Democratic Services Officer
Nicola Trainor, Deputy Head of HR (Operations)

213 Apologies for absence

There were none.

214 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 31 May 2022 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

215 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

216 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

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

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.

217 Review of MedPay

Discussion

Members considered a report which set out a proposal following a review of the Council's current performance pay arrangements to develop a reward solution to address identified challenges with Medpay and current market challenges. The Chief Organisational Culture Officer directed Members to paragraph 3.2 of the report which detailed why the current pay method needed to be reviewed. Inconsistent judgements and approaches to pay salaries had occurred in a system with a one for all process that was not appropriate. This review sought to potentially not only review pay, but to allow for progression through the bands through a choice based professional framework. This review would allow for a balanced structural mechanism that enabled an allowance that aligned with the market that could be reviewed based on market fluctuations.

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

Independent Review- it was asked what the rationale was behind not following through with an independent review and whether this was due to a lack of need or due to resource issues. The Chief Organisation Culture Officer said that following her review, assessment of the situation and all the concerns that were drawn out of the review, it was concluded that an independent review was not needed as it would identify the same issues. Consideration could be given to a review of the sample tests conducted as part of the pilot if determined that it was needed.

Two Tier System – in response to a question on whether the proposal would create a two-tier system with a market premium applied to certain positions and not others, the officer said that the intention was not to create a two-tier system but to create a system that rewarded existing as well as new employees. The current system did not adequately reward long standing employees.

Redundancies- in response to a question as to whether this would affect current pay or result in job loses, the officer said that this proposal was not intended to adversely affect pay or result in job loss. This project would take place alongside the Council's transformation programme which would look at operations and how to do things differently to improve outcomes for the residents of Medway.

National Joint Council (NJC) – it was asked if it would be easier to return to the NJC system or if this system delivered aspects that would be beneficial to staff that the NJC system did not. The officer said that whilst it would be easier

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to return to the NJC system, it was not advisable to do so as the proposed system would be more beneficial for staff. The difference with the proposed system was that it would drive better performance development through enhanced progression in a professional framework.

Fair System – in response to a question on how staff would be convinced that this would be a fairer system, the officer acknowledged that gaining staff trust through this process would be crucial. This was why a Pilot was being conducted, to ensure testing at every stage and to drive home that this new system would be focused more on talent mapping, career progression and giving staff the opportunity to develop.

A Member suggested that a report on findings from the Pilot be presented to Members at a future meeting and this was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

Pilot – it was asked how it was determined who would be included in the pilot and if it would be across a range of service areas. The officer confirmed that the Pilot would include a broad spectrum and demographic of service areas. In identifying areas, exit surveys where pay was highlighted as a reason for leaving and where there were high instances of locums being targeted, an approach was to invite staff to be involved in the Pilot.

Decision

The Committee noted the report and agreed:

- i. To support the approach not to pursue an independent review given the issues already identified.
- ii. To agree the principles and framework of the new pay approach as recommended in the report, noting the transformation funding already approved to enable the design and cost modelling to be undertaken, as well as a phased approach to implementation.
- iii. That a report on the findings of the 10% Pilot be presented to the Committee on completion.

218 Employee Value Proposition

Discussion

Members considered a report that set out a summary of the significant benefits individuals could receive in exchange for choosing to work for Medway Council. The Chief Cultural Organisation Officer added that this report built on some of the discussion around the MedPay review by focussing on how to ensure that the offer in place was beneficial to staff. Work was underway with Medway Makers to gain a better understanding of what attracted staff and made them want to continue working for the Council. The Council wide staff survey was due to be circulated in the coming week which would be instrumental to finding out staff needs.

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Staff Survey – it was asked what the predicted percentage response to the survey would be. The officer said that response rates from the short surveys during the pandemic were high and was hopeful that the responses to this would be slightly higher. The questions for this survey had been tailored to ensure they were more meaningful in the current climate and extensive work had taken place with the communications team to ensure the survey was accessible to all staff. Managers were being encouraged to allow time for staff to complete the survey.

It would be crucial to publish the results of the survey quickly and evidence that the Council had listened by publishing actions taken from suggestions.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report

219 Learning & Development Policy

Discussion

Members considered a report on the proposed revision on the current Learning and Development policy as part of its 3 year review.

Conditions of Training – It was asked if staff left within two years of having received particular training, either through ill health or redundancy, if they would have to pay back the cost of training. The officer confirmed that the condition to repay would not apply in those circumstances.

It was further asked what would happen if a member of staff became pregnant and went on maternity leave and the officer confirmed that there would be a pause in their training. The employee would be expected to resume the course upon their return to work.

Decision

The Committee approved the revised Learning and Development Policy at Appendix 2 and subsequent amendments to the Learning & Development policy as laid out in section 3 the report.

Chairman

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