

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Tuesday, 24 January 2023
7.00pm to 7.39pm

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, Thorne, Rupert Turpin and Van Dyke

In Attendance: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning and Programmes

562 Apologies for absence

There were none.

563 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

564 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

565 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 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.

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

566 Pay Negotiations 2023/24

Discussion:

Members considered a report which set out progress on the pay negotiations for the financial year 2023/2024. A chart setting out the proposed pay scales for 2023/2024 (Appendix 5) was tabled at the meeting.

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer advised Members of the process thus far, detailing the joint trade unions' pay claim for 2023/2024, an analysis of the pay claim and the Council's pay offer, as set out in the report. She stated that there had been no pay award in 2021 (due to the pandemic). In 2022, the pay award consisted of a 1.6% general cost of living increase, and a 0.4% MedPay increase. For 2023/2024, an initial assumption in the draft budget of 5% had been made. She referred to the Council's pay proposal offer which consisted of a £1,000 (pro-rata) base increase for all staff with a £500 gap between range 2 – range 4, in recognition of the discussions held between the Council and the trade unions with particular regards to staff on the lower pay ranges and the real living wage. She advised the Committee that the Council's pay offer was made in the context of the Council's current financial pressures.

She also referred to the further information requested at the last meeting which was set out in the report.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, some of which referred to matters discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee held immediately before this meeting, which included:

Pressure on budgets – concern was expressed that there should not be pressure on the overall budget available for the pay award as a consequence of dealing with the specific issues around children's social workers which had cost £700,000.

Sleep in payments - concern was expressed that the trade unions' claim for sleep in payments to increase from £45 to £50 was not being met, particularly when £130 was being paid to agency staff to cover these sleep ins.

Annual leave – it was commented that any options around the buying and selling of annual leave would require staff to have the appropriate amount of annual leave to start with.

Range 1 and range 2 – in response to some queries in relation to the range 1 and range 2 salary bands and the proposed pay rise, the Chief Organisational Culture Officer explained that the range 1 salary band had effectively been removed as a consequence of increases in the national living wage although there were still a small number of staff on range 1. However, some re-

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evaluation work was required because range 1 roles would not necessarily be classified as range 2 roles.

MedPay review – in response to a question relating to the review of the pay structure including the objectives and timeline, the Chief Organisational Culture Officer explained the basis to the MedPay review, which related to the creation of career progression. Each pay range would include 3 bands (developing, practised, and accomplished). She referred to market premia which had been applied for some vacancies but this could not be considered as a back stop and that the MedPay review needed to address this issue. She referred to the first 10% of the organisation which was being reviewed, this included for example, Legal Services. 60% of the organisation would be reviewed in year two and the remainder of the organisation in year 3. In response to a question regarding whether there was a plan in place if the organisation was losing staff quickly, the Chief Organisational Culture Officer explained that the MedPay review would be accelerated subject to resources.

Joint Consultative Committee – it was commented that during the discussions at the Joint Consultative Committee held immediately before this meeting, the trade unions had referred to the negotiations with the Council which had started earlier, as well as the focus on lower paid staff and the creating of gaps between ranges 2-4, albeit the trade unions' claims had not been fully met.

The recommendations set out in paragraphs 13.1 and 13.2 of the report were proposed and supported.

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

For – Councillors Carr, Fearn, Thorne and Rupert Turpin
Against – Councillors Mahil, Prenter and Van Dyke

Decision:

- a) The Committee agreed to recommend that full Council agree the following pay award for 2023/34:
 - (i) a general cost of living increase of £1000 (pro-rata) for all staff and, in addition,
 - (ii) the creation of a gap in pay ranges 1-4 through the introduction of a £500 gap, as detailed in paragraphs 7.6-7.8 of the report.
- b) The Committee agreed to recommend that Full Council delegate to the Chief Executive the authority to agree the competency-based awards for staff assessed under MedPay at Levels 1A and 1B.

567 Pay Policy Statement 2023/24

Discussion:

Members considered a report which provided details of the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer highlighted the key aspects of the statement.

In response to a query regarding the allowances (car provision and private medical insurance) payable to senior officers as set out in paragraph 2.39 of the statement, the Chief Organisational Culture Officer advised that there was no requirement for those officers to provide evidence that the allowances had been used for the specified purposes. She stated that these allowances could be reviewed in the future.

Decision:

The Committee noted the Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and referred it to Full Council for agreement.

568 Gender Pay Gap

Discussion:

Members considered a report which provided the Council's results for the current reporting year in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 which required all employers with more than 250 employees to report annually on their gender pay gap.

The Head of Council Planning and Programmes highlighted the key aspects of the report noting that Public Health had offered to help undertake a deep dive on the 2022/23 HR data in relation to protected characteristics and pay which would help inform the Council's new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

In response to a query as to why the proportion of males who had received bonus pay fell from 42% (2022 report) to 15% (2023 report), the Head of Council Planning and Programmes advised that this related to exceptional payments which were only received by a small number of employees, therefore, a small reduction would have a considerable impact on the percentage figures.

Decision:

The Committee noted the content of this report prior to publication.

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Chairman

Date:

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