

Medway Council
Meeting of Employment Matters Committee
Tuesday, 7 December 2010
7.00pm to 7.52pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Avey, Carr (Chairman), Tony Goulden, Mackinlay, Maple and Ruparel
- Substitutes:** Councillors:
Andrews (Substitute for Kenneth Bamber)
- In Attendance:** Sharon Alimo, Workforce Development Manager
Elizabeth Benjamin, Senior Lawyer - Litigation
Paula Charker, Head of HR Services
Ralph Edwards, Head of HR Services (Schools)
Wayne Hemingway, Cabinet Coordinator
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

572 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 2 November 2010 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

573 Apologies for absence

An apology was received from Councillor Kenneth Bamber.

574 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

575 Declarations of interest

Councillor Andrews declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because his grandson works for Medway Council 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.

576 Investors in People - Post Recognition Review

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which detailed the results of the Investors in People (IIP) post recognition review to attain Gold Status and the plans for the way forward which incorporated information from the staff survey.

The Workforce Development Manager gave a presentation which set out the process by which the Council achieved IIP gold status. She explained that a team of 20 internal reviewers had been trained to undertake the majority of the review work which reduced the cost of the external assessment. The review took place between 20 September 2010 – 1 October 2010 during which 130 staff were interviewed by internal reviewers and the Managing Assessor interviewed 14 senior and key managers. Gold status had been confirmed following review by IIP, which involved an Independent Panel reviewing the Managing Assessor's evidence.

The Workforce Development Manager also referred to the Council's staff survey which had been undertaken in April 2010, to which a 49% response rate had been achieved representing an increase of over 100% on previous response rates. She gave examples of good practice and celebrations of success as well as discussing the Council's Learning and Development function, work life balance, the Council's management and leadership capabilities, HR support, talent management, benchmarking and continuous improvement.

Members discussed the achievement of IIP gold status and the outcome of the staff survey with particular reference to the Council's Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) process, the costs of the external assessor, and how the Council's achievement could be most appropriately publicised.

Decision:

- (a) The Committee noted the report.
- (b) The Committee noted the way forward:
 - (i) A staff engagement group had been set up to look at the staff survey results. They will also work with the results of Investors in People where the areas overlap;
 - (ii) The internal reviewers already meet on a regular basis to plan future reviews, identify improvement areas for services and to gain a greater understanding of the standards. They will also be working on the areas that are not covered by the staff survey
 - (iii) An internal reviewer attends the staff engagement group to reduce duplication.
- (c) The Committee asked the Assistant Director, Organisational Services, to investigate how to publicise the achievement of IIP gold status in a

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positive and sensitive way, with a view to linking this to the forthcoming staff recognition ceremony in the new year.

577 Paternity Policy and Revisions to Adoption Policy, Maternity Policy and Special Leave Policy

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out the proposed Paternity Policy together with revisions to the Adoption Policy, Maternity Policy and Special Leave Policy. The Additional Paternity Leave Regulations 2006, which became law on 6 April 2010, provided for additional paternity leave and under such provisions the last six months of maternity or adoption leave could be transferred to the child's father, the civil partner or partner of the mother. It was noted that this would apply where the child was due on or after 3 April 2011 or in the case of adoption, where the child was expected to be placed on or after that date. The report also provided details of to whom the regulations applied to.

The report also stated that, as a result of the new regulations, the Council's existing Maternity, Adoption and Special Leave Provisions policies would require some consequential revisions.

A Diversity Impact Assessment had been undertaken on the proposals and that the findings from this initial screening indicated that there was no evidence to raise concerns that there could be a differential impact to any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Members discussed the proposed policy and amendments to existing policies with reference to the need for a formal review of the new policy. It was noted that the reference to the "Benefits Agency" in paragraph 5.2.2 of Appendix 1 (Maternity Policy) should read "Department for Works and Pensions".

Decision:

- (a) The Committee agreed the Paternity Policy, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.
- (b) The Committee agreed the revisions to Maternity Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (c) The Committee agreed the revisions to the Adoption Policy, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- (d) The Committee agreed the revisions to the Special Leave Provisions, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.
- (e) The Committee agreed that a review of the Paternity Policy be presented to this Committee in Summer 2012.

578 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 on 2 November 2010.

The report provided updates in relation to the following areas: Bidding Unit; Contact Point; Medway Renaissance; Social Care Commissioning Team and Integrated Youth Support Service. The Head of HR Services informed Members that with regards to paragraph 3.3 in the report, a further two employees had been redeployed.

Members discussed a number of issues including the full impact on staffing as a result of the forthcoming budget setting process and the funding position for the Medway Renaissance Unit. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, confirmed that future reports to this Committee would include a schedule of staff reorganisations and consultation processes. She also stated that redundancy costs (approximately £200,000) from the Medway Renaissance Unit would be paid for by the Council.

Decision:

- (a) The Committee noted the present position and the support arrangements for staff.
- (b) The Committee agreed to receive regular updates on the current staffing position as a result of the Council's budgetary position.

579 Exclusion of the press and public

Decision:

The Committee agreed to exclude the press and public for agenda item 9 (Early Retirement and Severance Payments) as it contained information relating to individuals under paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

580 Early Retirement and Severance Payments

Discussion:

The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, submitted a report which set out information on early retirements and severance decisions between 31 August 2010 – 30 November 2010.

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Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Chairman

Date:

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