

Medway Council
Meeting of Joint Consultative Committee
Tuesday, 30 January 2024
6.00pm to 6.45pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Hamilton (Chairperson), Fearn, Field, Filmer and Hackwell

Substitutes: Councillors:
Gurung (Substitute for Animashaun)
Myton (Substitute for Cook)

In Attendance: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Tania Earnshaw, UNISON
Mark Hammond, UNISON
Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Nicola Smith, HR Business Partner (Projects)
Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning and Programmes

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Animashaun and Cook and also Philip Bunn.

2 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 December 2023 was agreed as a correct record subject to a formatting correction (duplicate text).

3 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

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Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

Councillor Field disclosed that he is a member, workplace rep and chair of a Union branch for the TSSA at Transport for London.

Councillor Gurung disclosed that she is a member of Unison.

Councillor Hackwell disclosed that his wife is a casual employee of Medway Council.

Councillor Hamilton disclosed that she is a member of Unite the Union and the NEU trade union.

Councillor Myton disclosed that he is a member of GMB and Unite the Union.

5 **MedPay Review Update: Evaluation of Phase 1**

Discussion:

Members considered a report on the progress of the MedPay Review, with a specific focus on the evaluation of phase 1. The HR Business Partner (Projects) highlighted the key issues from phase 1 of MedPay Review. In particular, 218 employees were included in phase 1, of which 155 received a pay increase, while 8 employees left, which was lower than the Council's average turnover rate. She also highlighted the Diversity Impact Assessment, whilst positive overall, showed that the highest percentage of people in age groups 50-59 who have had their salaries honoured (25% compared to the average of 12.3% across all groups) and this would continue to be monitored.

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

MedPay Review phase 2 – In response to a question from Unison regarding concern over the number of the remaining staff being reviewed and the timescales for the review, the HR Business Partner (Projects) advised the Committee that the toolkit, templates and guidance had been improved throughout the pilot phase which would assist managers in phase 2. She also advised the Committee that additional resource was needed to support the review and reduce any slippage.

Financial impact – in response to a question from Unison regarding the financial impact of the review relating to market premia, the HR Business Partner (Projects) advised the Committee that the difference between previous market allowances and new SSRA after implementation was £142,000 without oncosts.

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Salary honouring – in response to a number of comments from Unison regarding concern over salary honouring including older members of staff (50-59) as highlighted in the Diversity Impact Assessment, the HR Business Partner (Projects) advised the Committee that salary honouring was in place rather than pay protection owing to issues with pension contributions. The Chief Organisational Culture Officer advised the Committee that there were pros and cons regarding honoured salaries and that Unison should continue to make representations on this issue.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report and agreed to forward comments to the Employment Matters Committee around salary honouring and the risks around the large number of staff in phase 2 of the MedPay review.

6 Pay negotiations 2024/25

Discussion:

Members considered a report on the progress of the pay negotiations for the financial year 2024/2025, including the Council's pay offer for 2024/25 for consideration.

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer outlined the pay proposals set out in the report's recommendations, including reference to Unison's pay claim and the Council's financial challenges. Reference was made to the pay award for the previous year which was a flat £1,000 increase for all plus the introduction of a £500 gap between ranges 2, 3 and 4. She also referred to the proposal to provide an additional day's leave after 10 years' and 15 years' long service, as specified in paragraph 8.9 of the report.

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

Proposed pay award – Unison commented that this was the first time that Unison had attended this meeting and could state that this was a decent pay award in the context of the Council's financial situation. Whilst Unison had submitted a pay claim of 9%, the Council had made a good offer and it was considered that Unison's members would accept the proposed pay award. Unison advised that with regards to other elements of the pay negotiations, such as changes to lower grades and sleep-in payments, that they were content with these changes, however, they also requested that a return to national conditions and a 35-hour week be discussed going forward, with the latter sitting outside the normal pay protocol.

Long service annual leave – in response to a question from Unison regarding whether the proposed long service annual leave would be backdated, the Chief Organisational Culture Officer advised the Committee that long service would be linked to continuous service.

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Decision:

The Committee noted the report and agreed to forward comments to the Employment Matters Committee regarding Unison's comments on the pay award plus their requests to look at a return to national conditions and the introduction of a 35 hour working week.

7 Update on Response to the Employee Survey 2022

Discussion:

Members considered a report which provided an update on actions taken in response to the Employee Survey 2022. The Chief Organisational Culture Officer highlighted key issues from the report, in particular the progress made against the action plan was set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report and the next employee survey would be undertaken in May 2024.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Chairperson

Date:

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