

Medway Council
Meeting of Joint Consultative Committee
Wednesday, 4 September 2024
6.00pm to 7.00pm

Record of the meeting

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

- Present:** Councillors: Mark Prenter (Chairperson), Cook, Field, Hackwell, Hamilton and Sands
- Substitutes:** Mark Hammond (Substitute for Earnshaw)
McManus (Substitute for Calder-Evans)
Tejan (Substitute for Fearn)
- In Attendance:** Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Jo Budd, Head of Talent and Development
Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning and Programmes
Steve Dickens, Democratic Services Officer

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fearn and Trade Union representatives Philip Bunn, Emily Calder-Evans, Tania Earnshaw, Mick Simpkin, and Karen Turner.

2 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 6 June 2024 was agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

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.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Joint Consultative Committee, 4 September 2024

Other interests

Councillor Cook disclosed that she was a member of the NAHT trade union.

Councillor Field disclosed that he was a member of the trade unions TSSA Transport for London and Unison.

Councillor Prenter disclosed that he was a member of the ASLEF trade union.

Councillor Hamilton disclosed that she was a Member of the NEU and Unite Trade Unions.

5 Employee Engagement Survey 2024 Results

Discussion:

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer introduced the report which outlined the results of the employee survey undertaken in May 2024. She provided a detailed presentation of the results and changes compared to the last survey which was undertaken in 2022.

The following issues were discussed:

Pay and conditions - the Unison representative commented that it was notable that only 30% of staff were satisfied with the pay and conditions. Whilst he believed last year's pay award had gone some way to addressing the issue. Unison continued to seek a return to National Joint Council pay and conditions.

Bullying - the Unison representative commented that the responses in relation to bullying were a significant concern. 60% of staff who had reported bullying were unhappy with the outcome and 50% of staff which had experienced bullying but not reported concerns may be linked with an expectation that action would not be taken by the Council. Unison would work with the Council, but a culture change was required when dealing with bullying issues.

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer agreed there was a link between staff being unhappy with the result of bullying complaints and other staff choosing not to report bullying concerns.

Decision:

The Committee provided comments to the Employment Matters Committee as outlined above.

6 Job Evaluation Policy

Discussion:

Joint Consultative Committee, 4 September 2024

The Head of Council Planning & Programmes introduced the report and outlined the policy which would complement the use of the Council's Guage+ software. The software promoted a consistent approach by the Council in job evaluation, provided a clear audit trail and guidance for managers in decision making.

The following issues were discussed:

The Unison representative welcomed the use of the new software; however, they would want to see how it was worked in practice to ensure it achieved a consistent approach. The Head of Council Planning & Programmes replied that the new system would improve consistency of decision making.

The NEU representative requested further information regarding the company which made the software. The Head of Council Planning & Programmes replied that the Council had engaged the company following the procurement process and the company worked with trade unions and the NJC, however, she undertook to provide further information about the company and circulate it to Committee Members outside of the meeting.

Equal Pay - in response to a question regarding whether the Council could be placed at greater risk of equal pay claims due to issues with the use of the Guage+, the Head of Council Planning & Programmes replied that the software made the process of job evaluation more robust and provided confidence to managers in decision making, however, if there were negative outcomes from use of the software, the Council would be able to provide feedback to the company.

Decision:

- a) The Committee provided comments to the Employment Matters Committee as outlined above.
- b) The Head of Council Planning & Programmes to provide further information to the Committee regarding the company Pilat which supplied the Guage+ software.

7 Recruitment Strategy 2024-26

Discussion:

The Head of Talent and Development introduced the report which outlined the recruitment priorities for the Council for the next two years to improve systems and processes in response to market challenges.

The following issues were discussed:

The Unison representative commented it was right to emphasise that officers wanted to work in the public sector, however, pay and rewards remained an

Joint Consultative Committee, 4 September 2024

issue. The Head of Talent and Development thanked the representative for their comments and noted their views.

Blind recruitment - in response to a question whether the introduction of a blind application process would be considered for future inclusion in the strategy, the Head of Talent and Development replied that the Council's recruitment software had the capability to do this. The Council would review recruitment data from January 2025 through quarterly monitoring and six monthly reporting, following this, the Council can identify trends and give further consideration to trialing a blind application process in July 2025.

Decision:

The Committee provided comments to the Employment Matters Committee as outlined above.

Chairperson

Date:

Steve Dickens, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332817

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk