

Medway Council
Meeting of Joint Consultative Committee
Wednesday, 29 January 2025
6.00pm to 6.40pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Cook, Fearn, Field, Hackwell, Hamilton,
Mark Prenter (Chairperson), Sands and Earnshaw (Vice-
Chairperson)

Employee Side Representatives: Tania Earnshaw UNISON
(Vice Chairperson)

In Attendance: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Jody Cox, Head of Payroll Pensions and Systems
Katey Durkin, Chief Finance Officer
Vanessa Etheridge, Democratic Services Officer
Nick Morgan, HR Consultant
Nicola Smith, HR Business Partner (Projects)
Nicola Trainor, Head of Council Planning and Programmes

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Marie Sweetlove - NAHT, Philip Bunn - ASCL, and Mark Hammond – UNISON.

2 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 4 December 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.

Other interests

Councillor Cook disclosed that she was a member of the NAHT trade union. For transparency, she also declared that she had a Medway Lesure Centre membership.

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

Councillor Hamilton disclosed that she was a member of the NEU.

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

5 Senior Management Leadership Competency Framework

Discussion:

The HR Project Manager introduced the report which introduced a Senior Management Leadership Competency framework that may be used when assessing the performance of senior managers.

The draft Medway Leadership Competency Framework was welcomed as an additional tool for addressing generic leadership qualities aligned with council values and behaviours.

Decision:

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

6 Gender Pay Gap

Discussion:

The Head of Council Planning and Programmes introduced the report which provided sight of the Council's results for this reporting year ahead of publication on the Council's public website by 31 March 2024 and on the Government dedicated Gender pay gap reporting website. It was noted that the Council did not have a specific duty to publish data on an ethnicity or disability pay gap, but this data was also provided in the report. It was noted that an updated replacement Appendix 5 – Diversity Impact Assessment had been previously circulated earlier that day.

Disability Gap: There was some disappointment with the disability gap and an acknowledgement that more work was required on employees' trust to disclose, as the declaration rate was not as high as it should be and therefore not a

completely accurate picture. A new role of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Lead was being established and would be responsible for identifying actions to take to improve the pay gap as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy action plan and work with the Equality Board.

Bonuses and retention payments: It was noted that with the new MedPay Performance, Progression & Pay (PPP) Policy, bonuses were no longer being paid going forward linked to the appraisal. Some children social workers received joining bonuses or 'retention' payments, which would also be reviewed in time. The Head of Council Planning and Programmes was not aware of any other retention payments but would check.

Decision:

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

7 Pay Negotiations 2025/2026

Discussion:

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer introduced the report which updated on the progress of the pay negotiations for the financial year 2025/2026, and to set out the Council's pay offer for 2025/26 for referral to Full Council for agreement. It was noted that the Employment Matters Committee would also be requested to consider an addition to the leisure discount offer of 25% for those already with a family or joint membership as long as the monthly payment did not fall below £20 and extending this offer to Medway Councillors.

The UNISON representative welcomed the proposed pay increase.

It was noted that the reasoning behind the proposal not to return to National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales, but to keep negotiations open on this matter, as it would be better to progress and embed MedPay PPP and await the delayed NJC decision rather take up valuable resource matching to something it was known would be changing.

Decision:

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

8 Pay Policy Statement

Discussion:

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer introduced the report which set out the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2025/2026 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 for referral to Full Council for agreement.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

9 Organisational Change

Discussion:

The Head of Council Planning and Programmes introduced the report which detailed new reorganisations of services and transfers under the TUPE regulations for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 and updates on-going reviews that have previously been reported at Employment Matters Committee but not concluded.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

10 Early Retirement and Redundancy Payments

Discussion:

The Head of Council Planning and Programmes introduced the report which set out the decisions taken in relation to early retirements and severance payments for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

The UNISON representative queried the lack of flexible retirement data such as requests and approval rates. It was explained that work had been ongoing looking into how best to capture this data and it would start to be captured from April, as previously agreed, and begin to be presented within reports towards the end of the year.

Decision:

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

11 Revised Managing Sickness and Absence Policy

Discussion:

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer introduced the report which set out the revisions made during the review of the current Managing Sickness Absence Policy. Managing absence was a key area of focus and an organisational priority to support the health and wellbeing of the Council's workforce. A review of the policy and supporting guidance was required to further support employees both when they are absent and when they return.

It was noted that in addition to the review, and subsequent revision of the policy attached as Appendix A to the report, a suite of guidance and a programme of

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training for managers on identified key areas would be implemented alongside the launch of the revised policy, planned for April 2025.

The UNISON representative queried whether consultation had indeed taken place with the unions. As this could not be confirmed, the Chairperson stated that the report would not be considered at the Employment Matters Committee that evening.

The HR Policy Manager noted comments made at the meeting. The report would be circulated for consultation and resubmitted to the Employment Matters Committee at a later date.

Decision:

The Committee noted that the report would not be considered at the Employment Matters Committee agenda that evening and resubmitted after the requisite consultation had taken place.

Chairperson

Date:

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