

Medway Council
Meeting of Joint Consultative Committee
Thursday, 2 July 2026
6.00pm to 6.28pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Cook, Fearn, Hackwell BEM, Hamilton, Peake and Mark Prenter (Chairperson)

Employee Side Representatives: Tania Earnshaw UNISON (Vice Chairperson) and Louise Stevenson AEP

Substitutes: Councillor Mrs Turpin

In Attendance: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer
Vanessa Etheridge, Democratic Services Officer
Hary Steer, HR Consultant and Policy Lead
Nicola Trainor, Head of Employee Relations

1 Appointment of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Councillor Mark Prenter was elected as Chairperson for the 2026/27 municipal year.

Tania Earnshaw (UNISON) was elected as Vice-Chairperson for the 2026/27 municipal year.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Philip Bunn ACSL, Mark Hammond UNISON, Lauraine McManus NEU, and Councillor Williams.

It was noted that Lisa Attwood AEP had left the Council.

3 Record of meeting

The record of the Joint Consultative Committee held on 2 July 2026 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson as correct.

4 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

5 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.

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

Councillor Peake disclosed that he was a member UNISON.

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

6 Mileage Rates and Car User Status Policy Changes

Discussion

The Chief Organisational Culture Officer introduced the report which considered the implications of the recent HMRC increases in tax free mileage rates and recommended minor amendments to the current car user status policy to reflect changes in HR and management practice.

The UNISON representative welcomed the changes, noting that issues which had previously disadvantaged staff under the policy had been addressed.

The UNISON representative requested clarity regarding staff affected by those employees who TUPE transferred into the Council with HMRC rates and currently received HMRC rates as part of their terms and conditions. There was also a request for clarification regarding where mileage started from, particularly for hybrid workers who predominantly worked from home.

In response the Chief Organisational Culture Officer advised that an HR newsletter would be issued with a follow-up which would address the points raised around mileage rates and hybrid working. The changes were a light touch whilst awaiting Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the outcome of a travel plan currently being worked on as part of the Gun Wharf project. There would be consultation with staff and unions on the travel plan.

It was noted that whilst the report stated that Trade unions had been consulted with on the principles of changing HR practices and relevant travel at the Corporate Consultative Committee on 2 June 2026, there had in fact been no

paperwork available at that meeting. There had been a proposal raised at that meeting with regard to bicycles. The Chief Organisational Culture Officer undertook to look into this.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

7 Redeployment Procedure

Discussion

The HR Consultant and Policy Lead introduced the report which sought approval for a revised Redeployment Procedure for Medway Council. The procedure provided greater clarity on the priority order of redeployment, how the process worked for redeployees, the responsibilities of parties involved in the process, and a concrete procedure for health and disability-related redeployment. It also included updated appendices, such as the introduction of an Employee Profile Form that aligned with our statutory obligations to provide a non-competitive procedure for redeployees. The revised procedure mirrored current redeployment practice within the Council, strengthened the Council's statutory obligations, and reflected the stakeholder feedback and operational data collected on the procedure.

The UNISON representative welcomed the updated procedure and recognised the benefits of formalising redeployment arrangements. With regard to employees subject to occupational health redeployment, particularly where health concerns had arisen as a consequence of workplace issues, including bullying or other detrimental working environments, some concerns were raised that employees placed within the redeployment process could potentially reach the end of the 12-week redeployment period without securing an alternative position and be left without a suitable or safe role to return to.

In response, the Head of Employee Relations advised that every effort would be made to secure suitable redeployment opportunities, whether temporary or permanent, for affected employees. It was acknowledged that individual cases could be complex and often involved wider processes running alongside redeployment arrangements. Guidance and training were being provided to employee relations staff to ensure a supportive and consistent approach and it was confirmed that trade unions remained involved in supporting employees throughout the process. However, it was not possible for the policy to address every individual scenario explicitly.

In response to a question, Head of Employee Relations advised that additional guidance relating to capability processes was still being finalised and apologised for the delay. It was anticipated that a draft document would be shared with trade union representatives as soon as it was available, with a target date of the end of July.

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Finally, it was noted that there was a minor typographical error within paragraph 3.3.3 of the procedure and this would be corrected before publication.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

Chairperson

Date:

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