

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Employment Matters Committee**  
**Wednesday, 29 February 2012**  
**7.00pm to 7.20pm**

**Record of the meeting**

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

**Present:** Councillors: Avey, Carr (Chairman), Christine Godwin,  
Paul Godwin, Iles, Irvine and Mackinlay

**In Attendance:** Elizabeth Benjamin, Senior Lawyer - Litigation  
Paula Charker, Employee Relations Manager  
Ralph Edwards, Head of HR  
Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer  
Carrie McKenzie, Head of Organisational Change  
Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

**837 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 18 January 2012 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**838 Apologies for absence**

There were none.

**839 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**840 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Christine Godwin declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda because she was a member of UNISON and retained her right to speak and vote.

**841 Proposals on Pay Review**

**Discussion:**

This report provided details of the Pay Review and outlined the approach to undertaking the review, following the Employment Matters Committee's decision, on 18 January 2012, that the Assistant Director, Organisational Services commence a review on pay and grades. The report stated that the existing pay and grading system dated back to 2002 and now required review.

## **Employment Matters Committee, 29 February 2012**

Additionally, Full Council had, on 23 February 2012, frozen increments to staff for the next two years, therefore, it was considered vital that a pay and grade review be completed in time for implementation by April 2014.

The report set out the timetable for the review and proposed the establishment of a Working Group to assist officers on reviewing the options and recommending principles to the Employment Matters Committee.

Members discussed a number of issues including the cost of consultants, risk around equal pay claims and the membership of the proposed Working Group. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services, responded by explaining that tenders had been received for the first tranche of work on the review, including an analysis of the current position plus an assessment of options available to the Council, and that this was likely to cost the Council around £9,000 including VAT. She stated that she would report back to the Committee if further use of consultants was required. The Assistant Director, Organisational Services stated that, in relation to risks around equal pay claims, that whilst no such claims had been made thus far, the risk would increase over time and this would be exacerbated by the increments freeze and the long pay grades.

### **Decision:**

- (a) The Committee agreed the timetable and approach to the Pay Review as outlined in sections 3 and 4 of the report.
- (b) The Committee agreed the establishment of a Member level Pay Review Working Group as outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report with the following Members: Councillors Carr, Paul Godwin, Iles and Irvine.

## **842 Budget Proposals and Implications for Staff**

### **Discussion:**

This report provided details of new reviews undertaken since April 2011 with detailed information on current reviews in respect of Shalder House, Duke of Edinburgh Team (Youth Services) and Glencoe Primary School. It was noted that Cabinet had recently agreed for further consultation on the proposed decommissioning of the Balfour Centre, following the receipt of a proposal from Medway Community Healthcare.

The report summarised the current position on Employment Tribunal claims noting that the Council had successfully defended and won all claims that had gone to a hearing.

The report provided details of the support for staff affected by any of the reviews. It was noted that Service Diversity Impact Assessments had been completed on the areas subject to reductions.

The Employee Relations Manager updated the Committee at the meeting in relation to the number of staff who had exercised their right to appeal against

## **Employment Matters Committee, 29 February 2012**

their dismissal, which had increased from 7 to 8 staff and that there had been one further settlement of a claim.

Members discussed a number of issues including the focus of the report and the need to include the transfer of staff from and to other employers, and staffing changes under the Better for Less/transformation programme. Officers responded that it would be possible to report on such issues.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee noted the present position and the support arrangements for staff.
- b) The Committee agreed that future reports include details of the transfer of staff to and from other employers and staffing changes under the Better for Less/transformation programme.

### **843 Equalities Working Group Update**

#### **Discussion:**

This report provided details of a recent meeting of the Equalities Working Group including representatives from the Black Workers Forum, Disabled Workers Forum and LGBT Forum. The report summarised the meeting held on 2 February 2012 and the notes from the meeting were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

### **844 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

#### **Decision:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt material relating to agenda item 9 (Early Retirement and Severance Payments) because consideration of these matters in public would disclose information falling within paragraph 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **845 Early Retirements and Severance Payments**

#### **Discussion:**

This report provided information on early retirements and severance decisions between October 2011 – January 2012.

**Employment Matters Committee, 29 February 2012**

**Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Wayne Hemingway, Democratic Services Officer**

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