

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 17 September 2012.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr R W Gough (Vice-Chairman), Mr G Cowan, Mr M C Dance, Mr D A Hirst, Mr P J Homewood, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr T Prater and Mr J D Simmonds.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Mr G Mills (Democratic Services Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

20. Minutes of the last meeting - 24 July 2012

(Item 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

21. Terms & Conditions Review and Reward Survey

(Item 4)

Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources. Mr Colin Miller, Reward Manager, was present for this item)

- (1) At its meeting on 16 May 2012, the Personnel Committee endorsed the approach to the terms and conditions review via staff surveys, focus groups and internal communication mechanisms. The Reward Survey is the main staff consultation mechanism to enable KCC to gauge which aspects of the Total Reward package are most valued by staff. The survey asks staff to rate aspects of the wider reward package, including Pay, Pensions and Retirement, Allowances, Benefits, Work Environment, and Learning and Development. Results will then be collated to enable a holistic view to be taken about any future changes to the package.
- (2) The overall intention of the Reward Survey is to inform the delivery of savings and influence the longer-term design of the wider Employment Package. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed prior to the Reward Survey going live and no adverse issues were identified. The Trade Unions have been involved with the Reward Survey, as part of the consultation process and they will help in defining the wider employment package.
- (3) This was the most comprehensive Reward Survey undertaken by KCC and so far some 2000 members of staff had so far completed the survey. Staff had been given a range of options to encourage their contribution to the future design of the Total Reward Package and so consequently the outcomes from

the survey could be used as a precursor to consultation about any proposed changes.

- (4) The Committee resolved to note the progress to date and that there would be a further report to its meeting in November 2012 presenting the survey findings and setting out for consideration proposals on the way forward.

22. Apprenticeships and the Employment of Young People

(Item 5)

(Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer Corporate Director for Human Resources. Mr Nigel Fairburn, Organisation Effectiveness Manager was present for this item)

- (1) Mr Fairburn said this report provided an update on apprenticeships in Kent County Council and other schemes to employ and support young people into employment. He highlighted the number of initiatives which the County Council had in place and the work being undertaken in order to take these forward. The County Council was committed to employing a younger workforce and to achieve this goal was working to the following priorities.
- To employ and develop talented employees from all demographic groups, particularly individuals with high potential who will be successors for employees that leave the organisation
 - To deliver high quality services by employing a workforce that reflects and understands the Kent communities it serves
 - To address the number of young people who are NEETs (not in employment, education or training)
- (2) During the course of discussion members asked a number of questions of detail regarding these schemes and stressed the importance of using the procurement process to promote the recruitment of apprentices within the private sector. Members felt that as this was such an important area of KCC activity there should be progress reports presented to future meetings of the Committee. For the next meeting the Committee wished to have an update on the GradsKent Programme and the Apprenticeship Scheme.
- (3) The Committee resolved to:
- (a) note KCC's approach to employing young people through work experience, Kent Success Apprenticeships, GradsKent, the Kent Graduate Programme and the Aspire young peoples' group the current quantitative data and plans for the future,
 - (b) agree to KCC signing up to the Inspire The Future initiative which would further build on the Council's achievements, and,
 - (c) note that progress reports would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee, with the first one of these focusing on the GradsKent Programme and the Apprenticeship scheme.

23. Employment Policies and Procedures - Update

(Item 6)

(Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources. Mr Ian Allwright, Employment Policy Manager was present for this item)

- (1) This report provided the Committee with an update on two specific areas of policy. The first was in relation to the guidance for managers and employees on social enterprises and the second was on the current take up of carers' leave. For the future this information would be reported to the Committee on an annual basis.
- (2) The Committee resolved to note the position with regard to the uptake on carers' leave and the guidance related to social enterprise.

24. Celebrating Staff Achievement - 'Because of You'

(Item 7)

(Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources. Mr Nigel Fairburn, Organisation Effectiveness Manager was present for this item)

- (1) At its meeting in May 2012 the Committee received a report on proposals to introduce awards that celebrated staff achievement across the Council. This report updated the Committee on those proposals and presented options for member consideration. The campaign would be split into 3 phases starting in October 2012 and finishing in December 2013.
- (2) During the course of discussion Mr Carter said he wanted to see Corporate Directors working closely with Cabinet Members on how best these awards could be developed across Directorates and rather than select one particular option he believed the way forward would be to have a mix and match approach so there could be some flexibility in the process as one fit may not meet all needs. This was agreed.
- (3) The Committee resolved to agree to the principles of the 'Because of You' campaign and that this should be developed and taken forward on the basis of having a mixed approach which looked to match local directorate needs.

25. Kent Manager Standard

(Item 8)

(Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources. Julie Cudmore, Workforce Development Manager was present for this item)

- (1) This report provided the Committee with an update on the changes made to the Kent Manager Standard which was to be formally launched in September 2012.
- (2) The Committee resolved to note the report and agreed the recommended changes to the Kent Manager Standard.

26. Employee Retention - Exit Surveys

(Item 9)

(Report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources. Mr Nigel Fairburn, Organisation Effectiveness Manager and Mr Gordon Baker of the consulting firm TalentDrain where present for this item)

- (1) Since December 2011 Kent County Council had taken proactive steps to understand what prompted employees to leave the organisation. TalentDrain, an employee engagement and retention specialist, had been commissioned to provide an exit survey service for voluntary leavers. TalentDrain had undertaken similar work in Kent schools. The survey was online although arrangements had been made for employees who do not have access to a computer to complete a paper version.
- (2) Mr Baker gave a presentation which highlighted a number of key messages from exit surveys and is summarised in paragraphs 3-5 below.
- (3) Employees were asked for their views on 12 organisational and employment areas. They were: organisational confidence; cooperation; career progression; salary & rewards; well being; vertical relationships; loyalty and trust; personal growth; job satisfaction; independence; ethical standards and working conditions.
- (4) Across these categories the majority of leavers said they were satisfied, most areas scored in excess of 70% with leavers stating that those elements were not a reason for leaving. Highest scoring areas include ethical standards 82%; independence 79%; loyalty and trust 75%; job satisfaction 75%; vertical relationships 74% and; personal growth 70%. Lowest scoring areas were: organisational confidence 54%; cooperation 60%; and career progression 65%. Approximately two thirds would work for KCC again and a similar number would recommend KCC as a place to work. Mr Baker said the data also showed some staff had left because of having a lack of confidence in the future of the organisation and not knowing what their role might be. Unhappy leavers often went because they felt dissatisfied with their job or with KCC whereas happy leavers went because they felt it was time to move on to new challenges.
- (5) The report set out a number of actions being taken as part of the Engagement Strategy (previously presented to Personnel Committee) and that would support the retention of talent. An Employee Value Proposition survey had also been undertaken which asked staff for their views on working for KCC. The results of that survey would be used to inform further actions planned in direct response to what staff said. Also a Rewards and Benefits survey was currently being undertaken to seek staff views on the employment package – that would help inform how future resources were targeted.
- (6) During the discussion it was said that managers needed to better understand the data related to issues around staff retention and that staff should be interviewed about their reasons at least 3 weeks before they left. Also

measures of how the Council was doing in this area should be subject to an external benchmark. The importance of ensuring this information was well communicated around the organisation was emphasised and as a start to that process the report would be sent to the Corporate Board before being rolled out further across the Council.

- (7) The Committee resolved to note the key messages from employees who had left KCC and the measures being taken to ensure the Council maximises its ability to retain talent at the same time as the organisation is contracting and going through a period of unprecedented change.