

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 25 January 2012.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Mr G Cowan, Mr D A Hirst, Mr A J King, MBE, Mr K G Lynes, Mr K H Pugh, Mr T Prater (Substitute for Mr P B Carter) and Mr J D Simmonds.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Mr C Miller (Reward Manager), Mr P Royel (Head of Employment Strategy), Mr D Shipton (Acting Head of Financial Strategy) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2011 *(Item 3)*

The unrestricted Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2. Local Pay Bargaining 2012/2013 *(Item 4)*

(1) This report provided a summary of the position for this year's Local Bargaining process. The report said the continuing difficult financial climate together with the challenges Kent County Council faced now and in the medium term had been key factors in the discussion with the recognised Trade Unions. The report also detailed the position with current inflation rates and the forecast by the Government that these would fall during 2012. The report commented on the fact that some two thirds a staff would be eligible to receive pay progression under the Council's Total Contribution Pay policy and whilst the announcement by the Chancellor that Public Sector pay awards were to be a maximum of 1% when the current 'freeze' came to an end was not binding on Local Government, this was a clear illustration of the context the Council was operating within. It was therefore as a consequence of these and other factors as described in the Committee report that it was proposed that there should be a cost of living award of 1% for all, without any "loading" to any particular category of employee.

(2) During the course of discussion Mr Prater proposed and Mr Cowan seconded that employees earning over £21,000 should receive a pay award of 1% but those earning under £21,000 should receive a pay award of 2%. On being put to the vote this proposal was lost there being 2 for and 6 against.

(3) Mr Prater then said that as an alternative option staff earning up to £21,000 could be offered a pay award of 3% with no one above that receiving a pay award or as a further alternative to that staff earning up to £30,000 could be offered a pay award of 1.1%. The overall costs of either option would be the same at £842,000 and Mr

Prater proposed that these options should be the subject of consultation with all KCC staff. Mr Cowan said he could not give his support to these proposals as it would mean the Council ignoring its established agreements to negotiate pay awards with the recognised trade unions. Therefore there being no seconder these proposals fell.

(4) Following further discussion Mr Pugh proposed and Mr Lynes seconded that the recommendations set out in paragraph 5.1 and 5.2 of the report should be agreed. Carried 7 for 0 against with 1 abstention. Mr Cowan asked that it be recorded that he voted in favour of a pay rise as he wanted to see staff receive a pay award of some kind.

(5) RESOLVED that the County Council at its meeting on 9 February 2011 be recommended:-

(a) to approve a pay award of 1% for 2012/13 and,

(b) agree a savings target of £500k from a review of terms and conditions of employment from April 2013.

3. Localism Act - Openness and accountability in local pay (Item 5)

1) This report addressed the actions KCC was required to make on pay as part of delivering its responsibilities under the Localism Act 2011. An objective of the Act was to increase the transparency of local pay and requires councils to publish the salaries of senior officials, enabling local people to better understand how public money is being spent in their area. Mr Miller said the Council already had in place a number of policies which already took account of many of the requirements of the Act in terms of publishing information about its pay policies and the salaries paid to senior staff. Mr Miller also confirmed that this report was about having member approval to a general pay policy and confirmed there would still be occasions when payments made to an individual would be subject to the rules covering the publication of exempt information.

(2) RESOLVED that the Kent County Council Pay Policy Statement 2012/13 be endorsed and recommended for formal approval to a future meeting of the County Council.

4. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Discretions (Item 6)

(1) The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations require KCC to review the employer discretions in the scheme on a regular basis and to make changes when appropriate. Under the requirements of the Pension Scheme each employer is required to publish its Employer Pension Discretions. These were last updated and agreed for the organisation in 2007 and the report highlighted 3 new Regulations and proposed discretions along with a revised Schedule.

(2) RESOLVED that the updated Schedule for Employer Policy Discretions be endorsed.

5. Annual Workforce Profile Update

(Item 7)

(1) This report provided a mid-year update to the workforce profile and focussed in particular on reductions in staffing number, particularly in Non-schools. During the course of discussion it was agreed that a report giving more information as to the reasons why people had resigned from KCC would be submitted to the meeting in September.

(2) Resolved that the report be noted and that a further report giving more information as to the reasons why people had resigned from KCC would be submitted to the meeting in September.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open access to Minutes)

The Committee resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6. Exempt Minutes of meetings

(Item 8)

The exempt minutes for the meeting held on 23 September 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record. And subject to the addition in the preamble of the words “..and Constitution’ the Exempt Minutes for the meeting held on 28 November 2011 were also agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7. Interim Appointment (Head of Internal Audit)

(Item 9)

(1) The post of Head of Audit and Risk became vacant in October 2011 and since then the Council had sought to recruit a replacement. Despite a recruitment process none of the applicants were considered suitable and therefore in accordance with the Council’s Personnel Management Rules the post was offered to a well qualified person who had previous experience of working in KCC and who was prepared to act in an interim capacity until more permanent arrangements could be put in place.

(2) RESOLVED that the interim appointment to the post of Head of Internal Audit be confirmed with the arrangement being for a period of up to 12 months.