

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, 4 June 2014.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter, CBE (Chairman), Mr G Cooke (Vice-Chairman), Mr N J Bond, Mr L Burgess, Ms A Harrison, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr B J Sweetland.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Human Resources), Ms J Cudmore (Workforce Development Manager), Ms T McCarthy (Strategic Business Information Manager), Mr C Miller (Reward Manager), Mr P Royel (Head of Employment Strategy), Mr B Watts (Group Leader - Litigation and Social Welfare) and Mr G Wild (Director of Governance and Law).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

4. Membership
(Item A1)

It was noted that the UKIP members on the Committee were Mr Bond and Mr Burgess.

5. Minutes - 29 January 2014
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 29 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC FOR EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6. Kent Code
(Item B2)

(Mr Watts attended the meeting for this item).

(1) Ms Beer introduced a report which advised the Committee of a review that was being conducted into alleged potential breaches of the Kent Code.

(2) RESOLVED that the background to this specific complaint be noted and that Mrs Beer report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

(At the conclusion of this item Mr Wild joined the meeting).

7. HR Service Offer
(Item B1)

(1) Mr Royel introduced a report which set out the background to the proposal to close the current Staff Club.

(2) RESOLVED that the Staff Club managed by Human Resources be closed and the associated costs and savings be noted.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Committee open to the press and public

8. Annual Workforce Profile Dashboard
(Item A5)

(1) Ms Beer and Ms McCarthy introduced a report which provided information on the staffing levels, demographics and diversity of Kent County Council's current workforce and included comparative information from previous years. The report was prefaced with an additional section on the new structure, effective from 1 April 2014, which provided base line information on staff within the new Directorates. The Committee were invited to suggest any changes to the format and to consider whether they still wish to receive information on staffing in schools.

(2) Members were invited to ask questions on the dashboard which were answered by Ms McCarthy and Mrs Beer these included the following:

- Ms Beer confirmed that vacancies were held as an alternative to redundancies but managers were mindful of the impact that this had on staff in those areas, and in certain situations agency and temporary staff were engaged.
- Ms Beer explained the move away from using exit surveys to "on-board" surveying of new staff 2 or 3 months after they had joined the County Council. Ms Beer confirmed that there was no mandatory requirement for staff leaving the organisation to complete an exit survey.
- Ms Beer clarified that the data on school staff only applied to those working in schools which bought into KCC's HR schools service.
- Ms Beer offered to provide a paper on KCC's retention strategy and how this could be informed by understanding the reasons why people chose to leave the Authority. In response to a question on the increase in the use of agency staff in Business Strategy and Support, Ms Beer explained that a large number of services in BSS were subject to the first phase of market engagement and these figures also included the transformation team whose expertise was needed for a short period of time.
- Ms Beer explained that in relation to "musculoskeletal" which was the highest reason given for sickness absence, the majority of these cases occurred in the

Families and Social Care Directorate and was related to heavy lifting and the physical nature of a lot of these roles.

- Ms Beer confirmed that the age profile for the leadership group was usual for the public sector. She referred to the work being carried out in succession planning and talent management in order to increase the number of younger people aspiring to more senior posts.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted

VICE-CHAIRMAN IN THE CHAIR

The Chairman left the meeting and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

9. Performance & Capability Procedure

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which set out improvements to the Council's Performance & Capability Procedure.

(2) A Member suggested that the reference in bullet point two of "KCC standards" in the Procedure relating to proposed action against a trade union representative should be amended to read:

"Any proposed action against a trade union representative **must** be discussed in advance, with a more senior representative or full time official of the relevant trade union."

(3) RESOLVED that the revised Performance and Capability policy and procedure be noted subjected to the amendment in paragraph (2) above.

10. Resolution Policy

(Item A7)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which set out the proposed Resolution Policy and Procedure and sought the Committees agreement.

(2) Mrs Beer confirmed that this policy would be communicated to staff via an emailed link to Knet. It would also be shown as a search result on Knet when a search on "grievance" was carried out.

(3) A Member suggested that bullet point one of KCC Standards should be amended to read:

"Resolution requests must be raised within three months of the event/incident occurring or **the employee become aware of it.**"

(4) RESOLVED that the Resolution Policy and Procedure as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject the inclusion of the amendment in paragraph (3) be approved as a replacement to the current Grievance and Harassment Procedures and that the Committee receive an update report in a year.

11. Progress report on terms and conditions for Public Health Staff

(Item A8)

(1) Mr Allwright presented a report which provided the Committee with information on the NHS salary bands for Public Health Consultant posts in comparison to Kent Scheme pay bands for senior KCC officers.

(2) In response to a question Mr Allwright confirmed that there was no evidence of other local authorities recruiting Public Health staff on NHS terms and conditions.

(3) Mrs Beer referred the current recruitment for the new Director of Public Health and assured the Committee that the appointee would be fully involved in discussions on this issue.

(4) RESOLVED that the update report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee within a year.

12. Review of LGPS Discretionary Pension Policy Statement

(Item A9)

(1) Mr Miller presented a report which summarised the pension policies that needed to be reviewed following the introduction of the new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) from 1 April 2014. The new scheme required all scheme employers to review their existing discretionary pension policy statement and publish a new policy statement. The report made recommendations for the adoption of a new pension policy statement. Additionally, greater flexibility was requested for funding early retirement costs by way of allowing lump sum payments.

(2) In response to a question Mr Miller clarified that in relation to “exceptional circumstances” in paragraph 3.6.4 this would be referred to the relevant Corporate Director and the Director of Human Resources to achieve a consistent approach to the definition of “exceptional circumstances” across the authority.

(3) RESOLVED That the Pension Policy Statement as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

13. Kent Manager Update

(Item A10)

(1) Ms Cudmore introduced a report which provided an update on the Kent Manager development programme which formed a key component within KCC’s Leadership and Management Development Strategy. She informed the Committee

that as at 31March 2014 there were 550 accredited Kent Managers. She referred to the new Kent Manager programme.

(2) A Member requested that future updates include an age profile of the accredited managers.

(3) RESOLVED that the recent changes and enhancements to Kent Manager be noted and the continued commitment to Kent Manager be endorsed.

14. Date of Next Meeting - 9 September 2014
(Item A11)