

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, 3 July 2017.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Mrs C Bell, Mr R H Bird, Mr P J Oakford, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell, Dr L Sullivan and Mr B J Sweetland.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr I Allwright (Employment Policy Manager), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Engagement, Organisation Design & Development), Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)), Mr P Royel (Head of HR) and Ms D Trollope (Head of Engagement and Consultation).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

(Item A2)

Mrs Stockell proposed and Mr Sweetland seconded that Mr Hotson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Agreed without a formal vote

3. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.

(Item A3)

Dr Sullivan declared that her husband was a KCC employee in the Early Help and Prevention Service. There were no specific items on this agenda that would require her to withdraw from the meeting or decision making.

4. Minutes - 24 January, 23 March and 25 May 2017

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 24 January, 23 March and 25 May 2017 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. People Strategy 2017 to 2022

(Item A5)

(1) Mr Royel introduced the draft People Strategy. This Strategy was intended to be an over-arching HR strategy for the organisation, a 5 year plan for recruitment, retention, development and management of people and their performance. The report also set out where the Strategy fitted in with other relevant strategies and 'guiding employment principles'.

(2) Mr Royel undertook to include specific reference to succession planning in the Strategy.

(3) The importance of the Committee having the opportunity to review the Strategy at regular intervals was discussed by Members and there was general agreement that there would be an update on the Strategy to the Committee in 9 months.

(4) In response to a question on how the employee voice was captured and reflected in the Strategy, Mrs Beer explained that the item later in the meeting on the Employment Value Proposition would set out one method, also there were the T200 middle management events and ad-hoc focus groups.

(5) Mrs Beer confirmed that over the past 3 years the officer training budget had been spent which illustrated the commitment to training and developing staff.

(6) RESOLVED that the People Strategy circulated with the report be agreed subject to the inclusion of a reference to succession planning.

6. Employee Relations Casework Activity

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Royel introduced a report which updated Personnel Committee on employee relations case work activity for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 including senior officer appeals hearings.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Annual Workforce Dashboard

(Item A7)

(1) Mr Royel introduced a report which provided information on the staffing levels in the various sectors of the Authority's workforce as at 31 March 2017, together with comparative information from recent years. The report also provided information on the diversity and demographics of the current workforce including a breakdown of staff by each of the diversity strands.

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

- Some disappointment was expressed at the apprenticeship take up. Mrs Beer confirmed that there would be a full report on the apprenticeship scheme to the October meeting of the Committee, which could include information on investing in existing staff and skill levels.
- In relation to KCC's age profile officers explained that there was a tendency for staff to join KCC later in their career, the last time an analysis of this was carried out the average age of recruits was 36. There was no compulsion for people to retire at a particular age. It was also pointed out that the retirement age was rising, particularly for female staff and there was a trend for people to stay employed longer. There were advantages in this for the organisation in relation to retaining knowledgeable and experienced staff.

- Regarding the reducing number of staff and the re-distribution of workload, Mrs Beer stated that, although some teams felt that their workload was increasing, there had been streamlining of back office process with the ability to do more online, also there had been the introduction of new ways of working and, in some cases, work had been externalised.
- Mr Royel confirmed that Senior Managers were still only 1.9% of a reducing workforce.
- Mrs Beer explained that the responsibility for deciding on the use of agency staff rested with managers.
- In relation to working days lost due to “musculoskeletal”, Mrs Beer confirmed that this was monitored by a Health and Safety Committee which include staff representatives. Also there were colleagues across the authority trained to carry out work place assessments.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. Total Contribution Pay Equalities 2016/17

(Item A8)

(1) Mr Royel introduced a paper which provided an overview of the appraisal distribution profile and the equalities assessment for the 2016/17 Total Contribution Pay out-turn.

(2) Mr Royel undertook to provide the data in graphical form in future reports.

(3) Mrs Beer explained the steps that were taken to ensure consistency of Total Contribution Pay (TCP) across Directorates. Also in theory it would be possible for all staff to be assessed as outstanding and the system would be able to cope with this.

(4) RESOLVED that the outturn and the continued progress to the ideal appraisal distribution profile be noted.

9. Workforce Health & Wellbeing Strategy

(Item A9)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which provided an overview of the proposed refresh of the County Council’s Workforce Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

(2) Mrs Beer and Mr Allwright answered questions on the Strategy which included an explanation from Mr Allwright of the work with managers to enable them to support their staff’s health and wellbeing as part of an awareness of the importance of work life integration.

(3) RESOLVED that the proposed health and wellbeing strategy, circulated as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

10. Employment Value Proposition

(Item A10)

(1) Ms Trollope introduced a report which provided a summary of the findings of the 2016 Employment Value Proposition (EVP) survey outlining the levels of employee engagement.

(2) Ms Tollope and Mrs Beer answered questions from Members which included the following;

- Ms Tollope stated the survey confirmed that staff trusted information provided by their line managers who were a key form of communication.
- Mrs Beer referred to the Talk to the Top sessions that had been held in various office venues which gave staff the opportunity to raise concerns directly with Senior Managers and Members, this had been valued by staff and could be re-instated.
- Reference was made to the opportunity for Members to arrange to shadow a social worker to gain an insight into that area of work. Members could contact the appropriate Cabinet Member to make the necessary arrangements.
- In response to a question on the excessive workload pressures on staff, Ms Tollope referred to the critical role of managers and the management of workload as part of service design within the transformation programme. She reminded Members that perception of workload pressure was an individual matter but officers generally acknowledged that the reality of working in the public sector included pressures from increase demand with reducing resources.

(3) RESOLVED that the EVP survey results and the improvements in levels of employee engagement be noted.

11. Date of Next Meeting

(Item A11)

It was noted that the next programmed meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 12 October 2017 at 2.00pm

12. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

(Item A12)

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

13. Interim Senior Management Appointment

(Item A13)

(1) Mrs Beer introduced a report on the interim appointment of Graham Willetts to the role of Director Education Quality and Standards being extended for a period of up to 12 months.

(2) Mrs Beer undertook to ensure that prior to any future interim extensions coming before the Committee, the Group Leaders would have the opportunity to be introduced to the officer concerned

(3) RESOLVED that Mr Willett continue as the interim Director of Education Quality and Standards on his current consultancy contract for a period of up to 12 months.

(Dr Sullivan asked for her vote against this decision to be recorded)