

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 25 January 2022.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chair), Mrs C Bell, Mr S R Campkin, Mrs S Chandler, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr P J Oakford, Mrs S Prendergast, Dr L Sullivan and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of People and Communications), Mr P Royel (Head of HR & OD) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

8. Substitutes

(Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Simkins.

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

(Item 3)

No Declarations were made at the start of the meeting.

At the commencement of Item 8 Local Pay Bargaining 2022 – 23, and following discussion with the Democratic Services Officer, Dr Sullivan declared an interest as her husband was a KCC employee and withdrew from the meeting.

10. Minutes - 11 November 2021

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

11. People Strategy (2022-2027)

(Item 5)

1. Paul Royel presented the proposed People Strategy for 2022-27 which represented an evolution from the Authority's first People Strategy, 2017-22. It set out an overarching employment strategy for KCC for the next 5 years. The Pandemic had created a revolution in employment terms with employees currently driving the market. The strategy was intended to drive and develop an environment that our current and future workforce want to be part of and thrive. This draft strategy had been shared with Trade Unions, agreed by KCC's Corporate Management Team and was now being shared with Members.

2. Mr Royel replied to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:

- a. There was no apparent explicit reference to an expectation of effectiveness or efficiency, was this deliberate? There was an expectation that this was implicit, but a greater emphasis could be made, in particular in the 'vision' statement and would be taken on board for the final version.
- b. Should there be a greater focus on external validation and the experiences of residents using KCC's services? Residents' experience of staff was important, and this should be captured. The intention of this Strategy was to be for the employer but the experience of residents would be a very valuable contribution.
- c. 'A complete recognition of the workforce' was intended to be a complete recognition of the individuals that make up KCC rather than as a collective workforce.
- d. 'Bring your whole self to work' there were concerns about the expectations of this statement, but it was clarified that this referred to equality and diversity. Each individual employee was made up of different characteristics and the intention of this statement was to be inclusive.
- e. How would talented employees be managed? – there was clear accountability for this with managers with appropriate support, guidance and framework. All employees had talent and should feel valued.
- f. It was suggested that Members email Mr Royel directly with other wording queries or suggestions for the final version of the Strategy.

3. The Chairman acknowledged that a good discussion had been had around the draft document at an appropriate stage where amendments could still be made.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee:

Agree the proposed People Strategy and agree to an annual review of progress of the Strategy.

12. Inclusion at KCC

(Item 6)

1. Amanda Beer introduced the report which had been commissioned by Personnel Committee on 23 June 2021 as a result of the Annual Workforce Profile report and the figures on disability. The report had been widened subsequently to look at how inclusive KCC is as an employer. She expressed her thanks to the author, Louise Gavin, for the comprehensive and detailed paper.
2. Section 2 of the paper outlined what KCC meant by inclusion; being an organisation which supported employees, regardless of their background or individual circumstances, to thrive at work.
3. Mrs Beer replied to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
 - a. There was a discussion about the need for all staff to trust that if they declared their protected characteristics this information would be used positively and properly by their manager.
 - b. It was vital that fear did not prevent employees raising any issues and there were processes in place to enable people to raise concerns including via staff groups.

- c. It was important that training included making the link between capability and disability, there was a heavy emphasis on continuing 'good conversations' within KCC.
- d. In response to a question about the deep dive on TCP data it was confirmed that there was no suggestion of ingrained institutional disparities in how managers had applied performance ratings.
- e. It was considered that parts of Kent, such as Gravesham, were very good at celebrating a multitude of cultural and religious ceremonies, members were encouraged to promote and recognise such ceremonies in their communities and on social media.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note and support the approach to workplace inclusion and would welcome a report back to the Committee at an appropriate time.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public
(Item 7)

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 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open minutes)

14. Local Pay Bargaining 2022 - 23
(Item 8)

(Dr Sullivan declared an interest in that her husband was a KCC employee and withdrew from the meeting).

1. Mr Royel presented the report which provided a summary of the position from this year's Local Pay Bargaining process. Endorsement of the proposed action was sought from Personnel Committee, prior to consideration by County Council.

RESOLVED by majority vote, to endorse and recommend to Council:

- 1. An increase of 3% for 2022-23 for all staff assessed as 'successful' with the corresponding adjustment to our pay scales.
- 2. In recognition of the continued desire to pay the equivalent of the Living Wage an increase to the entry value of our lowest grade to £10.00 per hour from April 2022 which will maintain our position above the national minimum and marginally above the Living Wage.
- 3. Personnel Committee agree the increase in the basic annual leave entitlement for staff in KR3-7 and KR8-12 by one additional day.