

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 16 November 2022.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Royel (Director of HR & OD), Ms J Clayton (HR & OD Manager), Ms M Flegg (Workforce Development Strategy Manager) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

33. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
(Item 2)

Dr Sullivan declared her Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as her husband was employed by KCC. At the commencement of item 8 – Pay Bargaining Update Dr Sullivan withdrew from the meeting.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022
(Item 3)

1. Subject to the inclusion of an amendment to the discretionary payments minute resolution explaining the reason for Dr Sullivan abstaining on the recommendation “on the basis that discretionary payments should only be made to those public facing positions which are difficult to recruit to” the minutes were agreed.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above inclusion, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. Apprenticeship Pay
(Item 4)

1. Michelle Flegg introduced this report which set out a review of the approach to Apprentice pay. The proposals would contribute to attracting candidates to apprenticeships, increasing retention rates and allowing KCC to remain competitive in the employment market.

2. The report set out options in relation to pay rates and there was the opportunity to bring apprentices pay in line with KCC’s KR grades and the report stated that apprentice rates should continue to be adjusted annually in accordance with the Kent Scheme and remain subject to review on an ad-hoc basis.

3. In response to a question Ms Flegg confirmed that the reasons for the 6 month probationary period were to ensure that Kent was the right employer and to build a level of skills and knowledge for the role that the individual was due to be employed in. KCC was not finding it more difficult to find apprentices, the market was narrower but people did still want to work for KCC.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee:

- Agree the proposal outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report to take effect from April 2023
- Agree that the rate would be adjusted in line with changes to the Kent Scheme pay award.

36. Employee Relations Casework Update

(Item 5)

1. Jane Clayton introduced this report which set out employee relations case work activity for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

2. There was an ever increasing complexity to the Employee Relations cases managed by KCC.

3. Following a query about Member Appeal Panels Mr Royel explained that there was a process to allow for appeal against dismissal – a further report would be brought to Personnel Committee to give assurance about the robustness of the process. It would also be possible to run a deep dive exercise for further reassurance in Members wished to do this.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the report of employee relations activity including senior officer appeals hearings.

37. Workforce Profile Update

(Item 6)

1. Paul Royel introduced this report which provided an update to the Annual Workforce Profile Report.

2. Members raised concerns over the increase in turnover within the council. Further analysis was being done to examine the high turnover rate in CYPE but this was in part skewed by the Reconnect Programme.

3. In relation to a question about the staff survey it was noted that the results of this were due to be reported to Personnel Committee in January 2023.

4. Members requested that an item on turnover rates be brought to a future meeting of Personnel Committee as Members were uncomfortable with the current levels of turnover. It was important to look at trends in turnover and sickness, a steady increase would give Personnel Committee cause to investigate further. A quarterly report was requested, to include comparatives, to determine whether this was a KCC issue or a wider Local Government issue.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the report.

38. 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 1 and 2 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open minutes)

39. Pay Bargaining Update

(Item 8)

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

1. Mr Royel introduced the report which updated Personnel Committee on the local pay bargaining process. Negotiations would continue and the final position would be reported to the Personnel Committee in January 2023.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the progress and welcome the update provided.