

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 20th September, 2023**

**2.00 pm**

Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,  
Maidstone







## AGENDA

### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, 20th September, 2023, at 2.00 pm**  
**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone**

Ask for: **Anna Taylor**  
Telephone **03000 416478**

#### **Membership (11)**

Conservative (8): Mr R W Gough (Chair), Mrs S Prendergast (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Mrs S Chandler, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr P J Oakford, Mr D Robey and Mr C Simkins

Labour (1): Dr L Sullivan

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr C Passmore

Green and Independent (1): Mr S R Campkin

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

- 1 Membership  
To note that Mr Chris Passmore has replaced Mrs Trudy Dean on the Committee.
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
- 4 Minutes - 15 June 2023 (Pages 1 - 4)
- 5 Future of Work (Pages 5 - 6)

#### **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
General Counsel  
03000 416814

**Tuesday, 12 September 2023**

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL****PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 15 June 2023.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chair), Mrs S Prendergast (Vice-Chairman), Mrs S Chandler, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R C Love, OBE (Substitute for Mrs C Bell), Mr P J Oakford, Mr D Robey, Mr C Simkins and Dr L Sullivan

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Royel (Director of HR & OD), Ms D Christie (Head of Engagement and Consultation), Mr I Allwright (Employment Policy Manager), Mrs J Clayton (HR & OD Manager) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS****55. Membership**

*(Item 1)*

RESOLVED that the Membership be noted.

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

*(Item 3)*

Dr Sullivan declared her Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as her husband was employed by the County Council. There were no specific items on this agenda that would require her to withdraw from the meeting or decision making.

**57. Minutes - 8 March 2023**

*(Item 4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**58. Employee Relations Casework Activity**

*(Item 5)*

1. Jane Clayton introduced this report which set out employee relations case work activity for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
2. The number of cases being managed formally was at a similar level to the previous two years.
3. Mrs Clayton responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
  - a. In response to a question on bullying and harassment cases there had not been an increase, there was the opportunity to have the process independently reviewed with an opportunity to appeal.

- b. Paul Royel confirmed that if individuals left during a disciplinary process KCC would ensure that they were provided with the right information to see the process through before resignation took effect.
- c. Paul Royel confirmed that if there was a pattern in relation to individuals leaving during disciplinary processes HR & OD would be cognisant of this and would escalate accordingly.
- d. There had been no particular increase in cases of poor performance and ill health. KCC was focusing on improving health and wellbeing interventions. Neurodiversity was becoming more difficult to manage in terms of balancing this against work requirements.
- e. It was confirmed that the numbers of cases were at a level expected of an organisation the size of KCC.
- f. Officers met with the trade unions on a regular basis and also had informal discussions. Trade unions were also involved in the development of policies.

RESOLVED to note the Employees Relations Activity report including senior officer appeals hearings and Employment Tribunal Claims.

## **59. Annual Workforce Profile Report**

*(Item 6)*

1. Paul Royel introduced this report which provided information from 2022/23 on the staffing levels in the various sectors of the Authority's workforce, together with comparative information from recent years. This information had been presented to Committee in a consistent form for approximately 10 years.
2. Mr Royel responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
  - a. The data within the report was provided for Personnel Committee to question and challenge, a further 6-month update report would be provided in November.
  - b. The Pay Award allowed a significant increase and recognition of impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the lowest paid KCC Staff.
  - c. A Member requested consistency of the age bands referred to within the report.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the latest annual workforce profile for 2022-23.

## **60. People Strategy 2022-2027 Evaluation**

*(Item 7)*

1. Ian Allwright introduced this report which introduced the first-year assessment of the People Strategy, with an indication of activity that had been undertaken within each of the core themes.
2. Officers responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:

- a. The question 'would recommend to others' was asked as part of the staff survey.
- b. The questions asked were not binary they were taken from the staff survey and gave a range of reply options.
- c. Benchmarking data was difficult because you were not comparing like for like but this would be done on an informal basis with colleagues across shire counties.
- d. The information was relayed back to staff through presentations to each directorate.
- e. Where there were issues of workload this was being monitored and responded to with action being taken at a local level.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the progress of the People Strategy in its first year and the detailed analysis.

## **61. Future of Work**

*(Item 8)*

1. Diane Christie gave a presentation to Members on the Future of Work and the opportunities and challenges for work at Kent County Council. This presentation built on the themes and trends shared with committee members in September 2021.

POST MEETING NOTE – this presentation was circulated to Members of the Personnel Committee on 19 June 2023.

2. Ms Christie responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
  - a. How did KCC ensure the right balance, given the emphasis on digital and technological advances, between the right skills in terms of ability and social/people skills.
  - b. A Member welcomed this thoughtful and profound presentation and requested that when this was brought back to the committee it also considered skills to take on less work as well as skills to develop careers and workforce.
3. Members requested that this report be brought back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the presentation and ask that Future of Work be brought back to a future meeting.

## **62. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

*(Item 9)*

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, 2 and 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **EXEMPT ITEMS**

(Open minute of an exempt item)

### **63. Discretionary Payments**

*(Item 10)*

1. Paul Royel introduced this report which provided an annual update on how discretionary payments had been applied across the organisation for the previous financial year.
2. A Member asked that the business cases for each payment be published, however it was confirmed that many of these contained personal information and that they were managed consistently by HR&OD.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee note the use of discretionary payments.

*Dr Sullivan asked that her dissatisfaction with the report be noted in the minutes.*



**By:** Peter Oakford – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services  
Paul Royel – Director Human Resources and Organisation Development

**To:** Personnel Committee      **Date:** 20 September 2023

**Subject:** The Future of Work

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary: Further to the paper and presentation provided to Personnel Committee on 15 June 2023, this paper provides a brief overview of the future of work, our insights and learning to date.**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 We continue to see a rapid pace and scale of change across the public and private sector. The last three years have seen a seismic shift in demand, expectation, and approach to work, with greater demand for flexibility at the same time as ensuring meaningful connections with those who draw on our services and our employees. We know that the emergence of new technologies continues to shape daily communication and connection. The relative stability of employment and slow economic recovery remains a significant challenge for employers.

1.2 The People Strategy has taken account of the changes in the working environment, flexible approaches to work, including the use of our buildings and the development of new support interventions and development for Managers and Staff. We will provide a presentation on the factors that we believe will impact and influence the ongoing development of our professional approaches to managing and supporting our people.

## 2. Highlights

2.1 Following on from the presentation in June, we will provide Personnel Committee with a precis of the key areas of focus for the future of our work. We will examine in brief the research and context and explore whether the workplaces have reached a settling point post covid. Research has been drawn from industry specialists and our own lead professionals who review policy and strategy in HR & OD.

2.2 The presentation on the 20 September 2023 will provide an opportunity for Members to discuss key themes including:

- Issues and Trends in the workplace
- Employment Action and the KCC response
- Skills
- Technology

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 Personnel committee are invited to consider and comment on the content of the further presentation.

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**Background documents:** The Future of Work Report to Personnel Committee 15 June 2023 and the copy of the presentation that was circulated to Members on 19 June 2023.