

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, 23 January 2024.

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

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. 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 KCC. At the commencement of item 6 – Local Pay Bargaining 2024-25 Dr Sullivan withdrew from the meeting.

2. Minutes - 24 October 2024

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2023 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. Employee Relations Casework Activity

(Item 5)

1. Mrs Clayton introduced this report which set out employee relations case work activity for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.
2. The number of cases being managed formally was slightly higher than the same period in 2022.
3. Mrs Clayton and Mr Royel responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
 - a. A Member noted that the number demonstrated a very robust approach was being taken by the County Council which was reassuring.
 - b. There has been no particular increase in cases of ill health. KCC supported managers dealing with ill health cases and had recently held a dedicated Q&A session for managers.
 - c. Members were offered reassurance that training was a 'safe place'. If there were particular cases Members wished to raise this could be done outside of the meeting.

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

4. Annual Workforce Profile Report update

(Item 6)

1. Mr Royel introduced this report which provided an update to the Annual Workforce Profile report which was presented to Personnel Committee in June 2023. The full Profile report would be presented to Personnel Committee in June 2024.
2. The report provided information on the changes in staffing levels, demographics and diversity of Kent County Council's workforce in the six-month period ending 30 September 2023.
3. Mr Royel responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
 - a. The 2021 spike in agency staff was a result of providing support to Covid testing and vaccination services through the Pandemic.
 - b. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff profile had increased both in terms of recruitment levels and retention.
 - c. Some Members were concerned that Kent's population was not truly reflected in KCC's workforce.
4. It was agreed that when the full report was presented to Personnel Committee in June 2024 it would include a focus on any protected characteristics at all stages of the recruitment process.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the report.

5. 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, 2, 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open minutes)

6. Chief Executive Recruitment

(Item 9)

1. Following the appointment of Amanda Beer to the post of Chief Executive Officer in November 2023 for a fixed period the Personnel Committee had requested that Mr Royel report back in January with considerations of how to recruit to the role of CEO.

2. Mr Royel gave Personnel Committee a presentation on the proposed plan for the recruitment of a Chief Executive.
3. The Chairman and Mr Royel responded to questions of detail and noted comments which included the following:
 - a. There had been limited movement from County Council to County Council at this level.
 - b. A recruitment consultant would be engaged at the right time.
 - c. Members were satisfied with the proposed plan for the recruitment of a Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the challenge of recruiting to the role and note the presentation outlining the proposed stages and steps to be undertaken.

7. Local Pay Bargaining 2024-25

(Item 8)

(In accordance with her declared interest Dr Sullivan withdrew from the meeting and therefore took no part in the discussion and decision making on this item)

1. Mr Allwright introduced the report on Local Pay Bargaining which provided a summary of the position from this year's Local Pay Bargaining process.
2. Endorsement of the proposed action from Personnel Committee was requested, prior to approval being sought from County Council on 19 February 2024.
3. Mr Allwright, Mr Royel and Mr Shipton answered questions of clarification from Members.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee endorse and recommend the following to County Council for approval:

An overall 'pot' of 4%, which covers the following:

- Total Contribution Pay (TCP) awards for all Kent Scheme staff which would provide for those rated as 'successful' a circa 2.6% increase for 2024/25 with the corresponding adjustment, based on KCC's pay principles to the Council's pay scales.
- In recognition of the continued desire to pay at least the equivalent of the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage an increase in our lowest grade to £12.10 per hour which will maintain our position above the national minimum wage and 10 pence per hour above the Living Wage for April 2024 (and includes the minimum requirement to satisfy the National Living Wage of £11.44 per hour for employees aged over 21).