

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4th March, 2025

2.00 pm

Darent Room, Sessions House,
County Hall, Maidstone





AGENDA

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, at 2.00 pm
Darent Room, 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): Mr A Brady
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook
- Green and Independent (1): Rich Lehmann

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

- 1 Apologies and Substitutes
- 2 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
- 3 Minutes - 23 January 2025 (Pages 1 - 4)
- 4 Staff Survey (Pages 5 - 6)
- 5 Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

- 6 Recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer (Pages 7 - 10)

Benjamin Watts,
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 24 February 2025

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 January 2025.

PRESENT: Mr R W Gough (Chair), Mrs C Bell, Mr A Brady, Mrs S Chandler, Mr M A J Hood (Substitute for Rich Lehmann), Mr A J Hook, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr P J Oakford and Mr D Robey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Mr R Smith (Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health), Mr P Royel (Director of HR & OD), Mr I Allwright (People Strategy Manager) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

9. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mrs Shellina Prendergast, Mr Charlie Simkins and Mr Rich Lehmann, for whom Mr Mark Hood was substituting.

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

(Item 2)

There were none for this meeting.

11. Minutes - 28 November 2024

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

12. Adult Social Care and Health Management Structure

(Item 4)

(Richard Smith, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health was present virtually for this item).

1. Mr Richard Smith introduced this report which set out proposals to redefine the director roles within adult social care, changing the Director Adult Social Care (ASC) – East and the Director Adult Social Care – North and West to become two Directors of Operations with accountability and responsibility for Short Term Preventative Services and Long Term Statutory Care Services.
2. Officers responded to questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:

- a. No changes were proposed to locality social workers. Assistant Directors continued to manage within the footprint of geographical areas.
- b. Would the timing of the proposals destabilise the current structure within ASC? The proposals related to the roles reporting directly to the Corporate Director only. It was necessary to have clear accountability and responsibility in relation to the Care Act from Directors, there would be minimal change below Director level.
- c. Members considered it would be beneficial to brief the Chair and Vice-Chair of Adults Social Care Cabinet Committee on the proposed changes.
- d. In response to feedback on the proposals, concerns and mitigations, Mr Smith explained that the Assistant Directors had been positive about the proposals which gave greater clarity over roles.
- e. Information sharing would be ongoing and included different areas including NHS, managing technology and establishment of open-door services.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that Personnel Committee recommend to County Council:

The posts of Director of Adult Social Care North and West Kent and Director of Adult Social Care East Kent; are redefined to introduce the new posts of Director of Operations - Short Term Support and Director of Operations - Long Term Support.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

(Item 5)

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)

14. Verbal update on Securing Kent's Future - Objective 4

(Item 6)

(Amanda Beer, Chief Executive Officer was present for this item and left the room once it had concluded).

1. Following an update to Personnel Committee in October 2024 on Securing Kent's Future – Objective 4, the Government had published the English Devolution White Paper and the Leaders of KCC and Medway Council had written to the Minister for Local Government and Devolution to formally request that Kent and Medway be included in the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP).
2. Members considered the clear messages in the White Paper and subsequently from Government that both Devolution and Local Government Reform would progress across the country whether or not KCC and Medway were accepted onto the DPP. In light of the consequential impact of this, including on senior

management capacity, Members agreed with Amanda Beer's proposal that the previous proposals made around Objective 4 would not be progressed.

RESOLVED to NOTE the update on Securing Kent's Future – Objective 4.

15. Pay Bargaining

(Item 7)

(Paul Royel, Ian Allwright and Dave Shipton were present for this item)

1. Mr Allwright introduced the report which provided a summary of the position from this year's Local Pay Bargaining process.
2. Endorsement of the proposed action was requested, prior to approval being sought from County Council in February 2025.
3. Mr Allwright, Mr Royel and Mr Shipton answered questions of clarification from Members:

RESOLVED, by majority vote, that Personnel Committee endorses and recommends to County Council:

- A minimum general pay award of up to the provision within the draft budget for all Kent Scheme staff 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 £12.71 per hour which will maintain our position above the national minimum wage and 11 pence per hour above the Living Wage for April 2024 (and includes the minimum requirement to satisfy the National Living Wage of £12.21 per hour for employees aged over 21).
- An, in principle decision, to increase annual leave by one day where the current allocation is less than 30 days leave as part of the commitment to realise equalisation for all staff.
- A commitment to establishing a joint working party to deal with the issue of expenses payments and processing.

In accordance with paragraph 16.31 of the Constitution, Mr Brady asked that it be recorded in the minutes that he abstained on the vote.

16. Chief Executive Officer Recruitment Update

(Item 8)

(Mr Paul Royel was in attendance for this item)

1. Mr Royel introduced the report which provided an update on the planned recruitment process to secure KCC's next Chief Executive Officer.
2. Following the announcements around Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation the environment for recruitment had changed considerably. There continued to be questions around timings of the decisions KCC faced.

3. Mr Royel responded to questions of clarification from Members.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- Note the progress and planned recruitment process for the Chief Executive Officer.
- Receive a further report on this activity and to consider the implications of the Government's decision on the Devolution Priority Programme at the March 2025 meeting.
- Agree to extend the current temporary employment of Amanda Beer as Chief Executive for a period of up to 6 months.

From: Peter Oakford – Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services
Paul Royel – Director of HR & OD

To: Personnel Committee

Date: 04 March 2025

Subject: Staff Survey

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper introduces the results of the 2024 staff survey.

Recommendation:

The Personnel Committee is asked to note progress and receive a presentation at the meeting on 04 March 2025.

1. Background

- 1.1 The survey was open to all KCC staff, with fieldwork conducted between 23rd September and 15th October 2024. All possible routes were used to reach staff and provide the opportunity to participate, including circulating QR codes in buildings, asking managers of remote teams to cascade the survey link, which could be accessed from any device, and repeat messaging across all corporate communication channels.
- 1.2 We received 4,037 individual responses from across the organisation, which was 40% of the organisation. Our overall response rate did drop slightly compared to last year, with decreases in responses in ASCH & CYPE, however we are still above the levels seen in 2021. Naturally we want to see even greater take up of the survey, but it is essential that we act on the feedback provided and the voices that have generously shared their experiences. Our engagement strategy for the year ahead will continue to build opportunities to triangulate the learning and insights from survey with other sources of data and feedback, such as workforce data, training and feedback and discussions at engagement events.
- 1.3 Our Analytics colleagues tell us that we saw very good engagement with the open or 'free text' questions, with over two thirds choosing to share their own thoughts in their own words. This engagement has actually increased each year since the open questions were introduced in 2021. Staff are still seeing the value of making their voices heard.

- 1.4 Detailed analysis has been undertaken by our colleagues in the Analytics Team and the response numbers provide a reliable basis to progress priority actions and activities
- 1.5 The findings this year show that we have held a stable position and largely positive picture across the majority of our 14 areas of focus. This tells us there are more staff responding positively than negatively in every section of the survey. And in only two sections of the survey did less than 50% of staff responded positively. Those two being 'Pay & Benefits' and 'Leadership & Managing Change'. We are pleased to see statistically significant improvement in Work Life Balance and Resources, Organisational Objectives and Purpose, and My Current Working Arrangements. At this high level, there were no statistically significant decreases.
- 1.6 The headline results and recommended action plans have been shared with the Corporate Management Team and Trade Unions. Directorate Management Teams have their results broken down by Division and where possible by service. We have conducted four staff briefings and recordings and data from the presentation will be shared on KNet. Whilst the overall position for the organisation is stable and the vast majority of the indicators show positive messages and reassuring endorsement of the steps we take to continue to improve the working experience of staff, there are areas to improve. A presentation will be made to Committee that will enable a better appreciation of the results and opportunity to explore in more detail and to note the planned action planning process.

2. Recommendation

Recommendation:

The Personnel Committee is asked to note progress and receive a presentation at the meeting on 4 March 2025.

3. Contact details

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