

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, 6 September 2022.

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

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

25. 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 9 – Pay Bargaining Dr Sullivan withdrew from the meeting.

26. Minutes of the meetings held on 30 March 2022 and 13 May 2022

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2022 and 13 May 2022 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. Annual Workforce Report

(Item 4)

1. At the start of this item Mrs Dean raised a point of order and wished to express her objection to reports 8 & 9 being classified as exempt. The recommendation from Democratic Services was that these reports were discussed in exempt session due to them forming the basis of future negotiations and this was agreed by the Committee.

2. Mr Royel introduced the Annual Workforce Report which covered the period March 2021 – March 2022. In summary, the organisation would continue to monitor turnover in staff, and a report would be brought back to Personnel Committee in November 2022.

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

4. There had been an improvement in the recruitment of staff who had declared a disability, attempts had been made to encourage existing staff to make declarations

where previously they might not have felt comfortable doing so and the improvement in figures might have been in part due to the re-classification of individuals.

5. In terms of staff turnover comparison with shire counties it was apparent that all had seen an increase and Kent was comparable to its neighbouring authorities.

6. Referring to mental health related absence it was considered that there had been a decrease in absence as a result of interventions put in place.

7. Referring to BME recruitment KCC was continuing to provide training and development for managers around recruitment and targeted advertising including the use of social media to reach more diverse markets.

8. It was not considered that the increase in turnover was the 'new normal' it more likely that individuals remained in their roles during the pandemic and that this was a temporary increase in turnover. Members would continue to monitor KCC's turnover alongside other shire counties.

9. A query was raised over the age summary table on page 24 of the report – Mr Royel would confirm the correct figures.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the latest annual workforce profile for 2021/22.

28. Employee Relations Casework Activity

(Item 5)

1. Mr Royel introduced the employee relations case work activity for the period April 2021 to March 2022, there would be a 6 monthly update to the committee in November 2022.

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

3. KCC had not seen an increase in numbers of claims withdrawn due to delays in the court process.

4. In terms of appeals heard by senior officers (as set out in 3.1 of the report), this was reported to the Personnel Committee to provide reassurance that this duty was being discharged appropriately. It would be appropriate for the Personnel Committee to challenge the process and request further information if there were large numbers of appeals or none overturned. In relation to the practice across other authorities it was thought that the majority still operated with a member review stage.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee notes the report of employee relations activity including senior officer appeals hearings and Employment Tribunal claims.

29. Exclusion of the Press and Public

(Item 6)

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)

30. Discretionary Payments

(Item 7)

1. Mr Royel introduced the report on discretionary payments.
2. In response to a question about the business case put forward for discretionary payments, these were unique and personalised and would contain clear criteria used to justify a market premium payment and market analysis. Where total remuneration was in excess of £50,000 this was published on KCC's website.
3. All payments were subject to performance, if there were concerns over performance there was a process in place to manage this.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the use of discretionary payments.

Dr Sullivan asked that it be noted that she abstained on this recommendation.

31. Pay Principles

(Item 8)

1. Mr Royel introduced the report on pay principles alongside Mr Shipton who would answer any financial questions Members had.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree the following:

- Continue to at least match the Foundation Living Wage for lowest pay range (KR3)
- Remove the principle of maintaining £1200 between the tops of grade
- Increase the difference between KR3, KR4, KR5 and bottom of KR6 to 2.5%.

32. Pay Bargaining

(Item 9)

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

1. Mr Royel introduced the report on pay bargaining, negotiations would continue and there would be a further update to the Personnel Committee in November. Mr Royel read out a letter from the Trade Unions.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the initial engagement and the update given at the meeting.