

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday 18 May 2011

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr R W Gough, Mr G Koowaree (substitute for Mr T Prater), Mr K G Lynes, Mr J D Simmonds Mr M Snelling (substitute for A J King), Mr D Hirst and Mr G Cowan

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of Human Resources) and Mr G Mills (Democratic Services).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

15. Minutes

The unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2011 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Statutory and Proper Officers of Kent County Council

(item 4 report by Mr Geoff Wild, Director of Governance)

(1) The Local Government Act 1972 and other legislation require local authorities to make specific statutory appointments and designate proper officers to carry out particular roles and carry specific responsibilities and this report reviewed the current position with respect to such appointments following the implementation of Change to Keep Succeeding.

(2) Resolved that the designation of individual officers as statutory and proper officers of Kent County Council as set out in the table attached to the Committee be agreed and reported onto the County Council accordingly .

17. Annual Workforce Profile Report

(item 5 report by Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director of Human Resources) Mr D Cox, E Business Development Manager was present for this item)

(1) This report paper detailed the key aspects of the make up of the Council's workforce at 31 March 2011, with comparative staffing information from previous years. The report also included reasons for changes in staffing levels over the previous year together with information on the demographics and diversity of Kent County Council's current workforce. Members of the Committee welcomed the detail of information presented in this report which provided important information as to the profile of KCC's staff across a number of key areas. These included recruitment and retention levels, sickness absence, equality and diversity and vacancy trends.

(2) Following discussion the Committee Resolved to note the report and to further note that a report commenting on the significant staffing changes which are taking place at the present time will be submitted to a future meeting. That report was also to include feed back from exit interviews and what the Council should be doing in order to address any areas where there were critical staffing shortages.

18. Disciplinary and Grievance Activity

(item 6 report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member and Mrs Amanda Beer Corporate Director of Human Resources)(Nicola Lodemore, Employment Policy Manager was present for this item)

(1) This report updated the Committee on discipline and grievance activity for the last 6 months of 2010/11, including details of appeals.

(2) Resolved that the report be noted and that future reports on this matter be submitted to the Committee at appropriate intervals. .

19. Lease Car Arrangements

(Item 7 report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director of Human Resources) Mr D Shipton Financial Strategy Manager and Mr Colin Miller Reward Manager were present for this item)

(The Chairman declared consideration of this item to be urgent on the grounds that the members of staff affected by the proposals needed to be given certainty as to the future of the Council's Lease Care Scheme)

(1) The approved budget requires savings to be achieved from changes to staff travel allowances. The Committee had previously concluded that the current criteria for essential car users was not sustainable. At the Budget meeting on 17 February 2011 the County Council agreed essential user status should be abolished but that there should be no financial detriment to staff on KR 10 or below. The Council delegated to the Personnel Committee responsibility to agree appropriate mitigation.

(2) The report put forward options as to how the required savings could be achieved and recommended that no new lease car arrangements should be entered into from 1 July 2011 and that people on the no detriment list, as detailed in the report should be moved onto the casual user there should move to casual user status as their roles alter.

(3) During the course of discussion members raised a number of points of detail on the operation of the existing and the proposed new arrangements. There was particular concern raised that any new arrangements should not disadvantage staff working in critical areas such as front line social workers who had to have access to a reliable car in order to do their job. A number of suggestions were put forward as to how that could possibly be achieved but they would have an adverse cost when matched against the required budget savings.

(3) Discussion concluded with the Committee agreeing that no decisions should be taken at this time so that the further options discussed at the meeting could be properly assessed and a decision taken in the light of that assessment.

(4) The Committee therefore resolved that consideration of this matter be deferred pending further consideration of the options and in particular on the costs which would accrue should some arrangement be reached where by staff in critical service areas such as front line social work are given financial help towards having a vehicle which was used for their work. The Committee further resolved that depending on the outcome of these further investigations, the Corporate Director for Human Resources in consultation with the Committee Chairman and spokesmen for the other two groups be granted delegated authority to take forward the most relevant option.

20. Health and Well being and Attendance – Progress report

(item 8 report by Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business Strategy, Performance and Health Reform and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director of Human Resources)(Nicola Lodemore, Employment Policy Manager was present for this item)

(1) The development and implementation of the Health Well-Being and Attendance (HWA) initiative and the on-going support provided by HR has resulted in a cultural shift. Managers have embraced the direction and with support from HR well and are handling health issues that affect work and attendance with robustness and pragmatism.

(2) During the course of discussion members spoke of the need for the Council to have in place robust mechanisms to monitor issues such as sickness absence and whilst recognising that considerable progress is being made in this area felt it was one where possible more could be done and therefore an options report should be submitted to the next meeting.

Exempt Items

The following are the **unrestricted** minutes of matters which the Committee resolved should be discussed pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21. The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2011 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman,

22 Commercial Services – Transport Integration Office

(oral report by Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources)

(1) The Corporate Director for Human Resources gave members an oral update on the robust action being taken by the County Council in response to the recent reports regarding certain events alleged to have taken place within the Commercial Services Transport Integration Office. As a result of the investigations which had been undertaken to date 3 KCC officers had been suspended and would now be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedures. 3 other officers were the subject of further investigations.

(2) The Committee placed on record it's thanks to the Corporate Director for her report and for the swiftness of the investigation and actions being taken in response to these very serious matters.