

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 16 May 2012.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr G Cowan, Mrs T Dean (Substitute for Mr T Prater), Mr M C Dance, Mr R W Gough (Vice-Chairman), Mr D A Hirst, Mr A J King, MBE and Mr J D Simmonds.

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

9. Minutes

(Item 4)

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 January and 5 March 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record

10. Annual Workforce Profile

(Item 5– Report by the Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs Amanda Beer, Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Nicola Lodemore, HR Business Support Manager and Ann Hopkins, Kent Graduate Services Manager were present for this item)

(1) This report contained details of the make up of the Authority's workforce as at 31 March 2012, with comparative staffing information from previous years. The report focused on the changes in staffing levels and the reasons for change over the previous year. Additionally, information was provided on the demographics and diversity of Kent County Council's current workforce.

(2) Mrs Beer said KCC's workforce had reduced by some 12.4% since March 2011 and there would be a continuing drop in staffing levels over the next two years. There had also been a drop in sickness levels which were now averaging at 7.78 days lost per FTE. The Council was also seeing a reduction in the number of temporary staff. Also as the reorganisation of Directorates progressed the layers of management between corporate directors and front line staff was being rigorously kept to 6.

(3) During the course of discussion members spoke of the need to recruit and retain good quality younger staff and managers needed to show more willingness to take on younger, less experienced people who none the less showed the right potential. As part of this the Council was looking to develop an 18+ recruitment programme which would sit along side the Kent Graduate Programme and the Apprenticeship schemes. A report on the 18+ recruitment programme appeared later on the agenda

(4) Following further discussion the Committee resolved to note the report and to also note that there would be a report to the meeting in September covering specifically the employment of staff on fixed term contracts.

11. Discipline and Grievance Activity

(Item 6– Report by the Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs Amanda Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources)

(1) The Personnel Committee received regular six monthly reports on discipline and grievance activity and that provided an overview of the distribution of cases by directorate and type of issue. Since the last report for the last 6 months of financial year 2010/11 all directorates had restructured significantly. The figures in this report therefore referred to the newly formed directorates only.

(2) The Committee resolved to note the 6 monthly report of employee relations activity including senior officer appeal hearings.

12. Terms and Conditions Review

(Item 7 - Report by the Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs A Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Mr Colin Miller, reward manager was present for this item.)

(1) There is a requirement to make savings of £500k from terms and conditions as of April 2013. This generated an opportunity to take a broader, more considered approach to a review of terms and conditions. In order to make more informed choices the report recommended staff be consulted about what to change, both in the shorter and longer term.

(2) The Committee resolved to endorse the proposed approach as detailed in the report and noted that there would be a progress report to the Committees meeting in September. Also once finalised members of the Committee would be sent a copy of the staff consultation document.

13. Proposed development of an 18+ Scheme for Kent County Council

(Item 8 - Report by the Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs A Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Ann Hopkins Graduate Services Manager was present for this item).

(1) This report discussed how KCC could attract and retain more young people to become employees of KCC, specifically those leaving school or college with A-levels or equivalent, through an 18+ Programme. The proposal is for an 18+ Programme open to A Level school/college leavers as a means of them gaining skills and knowledge to acquire work experience whilst gaining recognised qualifications. It is recommended that the programme could consist of a two year period of personal development and study consisting of a formal qualification and development activity.

(2) During the course of discussion members said they welcomed this initiative but wished to see it expanded in terms of its ambition and numbers of recruits.

Therefore in endorsing the recommendations, the Committee agreed there would be an update to the Committee's meeting in September.

(3) The committee resolved to endorse the principles of adopting a 18+ Programme as described in the Committee report but that there should be a further report to the Committee's meeting in September looking at how the scope of the scheme could be widened and expanded to include a greater number of A level students and also how the programme would link to other KCC training and employment programmes.

14. Celebrating Staff Achievement - Going the Extra Mile Awards

(Item 9– Report by the Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs A Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Nigel Fairburn, Organisation Effectiveness Manager was present for this item)

(1) This report proposed that individual directorate annual staff awards are replaced with annual 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM) awards that celebrate staff achievement across the Council (One Council) to take place in November each year. Among the purposes of the awards would be to recognise exemplar service and performance of staff and demonstrate that KCC valued staff and their contribution. Also the awards would showcase outstanding work/service to the wider staff community and promote a positive KCC tradition – the employer we want to be.

(2) During discussion members supported the concept of celebrating staff achievement in this way but asked officers to consider having a wider range of awards. Therefore there would be a further update to the meeting of the Committee in September.

15. Engagement Strategy and Employment Value Proposition

(Item 10– Report by the Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs A Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Mr Ian Allwright, Employment Policy Manager was present for this item)

(1) This report provided the Committee with a copy of the revised draft of the Employee Engagement Strategy. A key element of the strategy required an understanding of how the Employment Value Proposition (EVP) informed levels of employee engagement within the Authority. A survey of a sample of the Council's staff was conducted in order to obtain a better understanding, within the context of the EVP, of the levels of engagement of the Authority's employees. The report presented a summary of the survey's findings.

(2) The Committee resolved to endorse the draft Engagement Strategy and to note the outcomes of the Employment Value Proposition Survey.

16. Training Strategy

(Item 11– Report by the Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Business, Performance and Health and Mrs A Beer. Corporate Director for Human Resources) (Julie Cudmore, Workforce development Manager was present for this item)

(1) This report provided information on the new Training Strategy and the establishment of Directorate Organisation Development Groups.

(2) During the course of discussion members spoke of the need to ensure that quality assurance was built into the strategy and that training strategies needed to be developed in order to meet the needs of front line staff.

(3) The Committee resolved to note the Training Strategy and the role of the Directorate Organisation Development Groups.

17. Exempt Minutes - 5 March 2012

(Item 15)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.