

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 10 September 2013.

PRESENT: Mr P B Carter (Chairman), Mr G Cooke (Vice-Chairman), Mr N J Bond, Mrs T Dean, Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr J D Simmonds, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr B J Sweetland.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M E Whybrow.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr I Allwright (Employment Policy Manager), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director of Human Resources), Ms S Dunn (Head of Skills and Employability), Mr P Royel (Head of Employment Strategy), Mr N Fairburn (Workforce Development Manager) and Mr J Pope (Professional Adviser - Organisation Effectiveness).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

12. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2013

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2013 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

13. The Living Wage

(Item 4)

(1) Mrs Beer and Mr Royel submitted a report which set out details of the National Living Wage, its compatibility with Kent County Council pay arrangements and its potential impact on the authority.

(2) Members discussed the report and a number of points were made including the following:

- As there were 86 councils in England and Wales who had either declared themselves a living wage authority or were committed to paying at this level, Members asked for more detail about how the living wage worked for these authorities. It was pointed out that only 2 of the 86 councils were County Council and these were much smaller than Kent.
- Members asked for more details about the implications of introducing the living wage in relation to KCC's engagement with contractors.
- Mrs Beer confirmed that the County Council did not have a problem recruiting at KR2. A question was asked about the implication of removing the KR2 differential, Mr Royel clarified that due to the numbers of staff on KR3, the impact would be significant.

- It was pointed out that introducing the Living Wage would have an impact on KCC school staff and that this needed to be fully assessed and the views of schools sought.
- It was stated that the impact of the pension contributions made by the employers on top of salary should also be taken into account. The Living Wage should be compared to the whole benefits package offered to KCC staff.

(3) Mr Whybrow was invited to speak on this item. He spoke in support of the Living Wage and expressed the view that if 86 Councils in England and Wales had the Living Wage then it should not be insurmountable for Kent to introduce it. Kent was an expensive part of the country to live in and whilst KCC was fair to its employees the current minimum KCC salary of £14,317 seemed low. He asked for further analysis to be carried out into the implications for Kent taking into account how other authorities had introduced the Living Wage and he was keen to see this progressed.

(4) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members be noted and a full report be submitted to a meeting of the Personnel Committee within six months, which would include a full analysis of the implications for KCC of introducing the Living Wage, including the points raised by Members.

14. Apprenticeship Programme

(Item 5)

(1) Ms Dunn and Mr Fairburn introduced a report on the joint strategy which was designed to deliver a step change in apprenticeships in the County Council. This had been a joint piece of work between the Human Resources and Employment and Skills Divisions. The report set out the vision, including more apprentices in higher level apprenticeships and how this would be delivered commencing with a pilot with business units.

(2) The Chairman suggested that information such as the number of apprentices and their age profile should be added to the Performance Dashboard.

(3) Members drew attention to the successful apprenticeships in areas such as Highways and Transportation. It was also emphasised that apprenticeships should be of a good quality and equipped the apprentice to enter employment.

(4) Members discussed the need to select the best people to become apprentices in the County Council but this needed to be balanced with giving support to enable vulnerable young people to also become apprentices. Mrs Dean requested data on apprentices to ensure that there were opportunities available for young people from vulnerable groups. Ms Dunn referred to the Assisted Apprenticeship programme which worked with the Youth Offending Service and Trouble Families programme. She offered to provide Members with a paper on this programme.

(5) In response to a question regarding the proposal to hold vacancies against apprenticeship and ensuring that this would not disadvantage existing staff, Mr Fairburn explained that in relation to vacancies at K2 to K4 existing staff were considered first if they had the skills and then apprentices would be considered. Mr

Fairburn indicated that there had not been significant numbers of existing staff appointed to vacancies in these grades.

(6) RESOLVED that the approach outlined in the report which will be piloted in County Council business units be noted and that an update report be submitted to the Committee in a years time.

15. Employment Value Proposition & Employee Engagement

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which set out the findings of the 2013 Employment Value Proposition (EVP) staff survey and outlined interventions to enhance levels of employee engagement.

(2) Mrs Beer confirmed that the emphasis was on managers taking responsibility for their teams and the staff within them.

(3) Members highlighted the importance of managers being leaders and maintaining staff moral in challenging times.

(4) RESOLVED that the Employment Value Proposition survey results and the activities being undertaken to improve levels of employee engagement be noted.

16. Staff Awards

(Item 7)

(1) Mr Pope introduced a report which informed the Committee how staff awards were recognising the contribution made by staff to support and deliver services. He gave a presentation on the "Because of You" staff award scheme, explaining the basis of the scheme and the process, and he confirmed that managers were encouraged to be innovative in the way in which they applied the scheme and celebrated successes in their areas.

(2) The Chairman welcomed Susan Baron from the Margate Adult Education team, Hayley Bradbury, Procurement Officer and Emma Ginley, Business Support Assistant, who had all been recognised with "Because of You" awards. They explained how they had heard that they had won their award and what it had meant to them. One of the things that they valued most about receiving their awards was knowing that the people that they worked with appreciated the contribution that they made. The Committee congratulated Susan, Hayley and Emma on their awards and thanked them for the contribution that they have made to the work of the County Council.

(3) RESOLVED that the success of the Staff Awards initiative and the importance of recognising staff to ensure the County Council has an engaged and motivated workforce that is able to Face the Challenge be noted.

17. Transformation Programme - Presentation

(Item 8)

(1) The Chairman gave a presentation on the personnel implications of the whole Council transformation plan ahead of the paper on the whole Council transformation plan, phase 1.

(2) The Chairman set out the scale of the challenge facing the County Council which was the need to achieve a £240m reduction in budget. The pace of change was crucial in order to be able to set the budget in 2015/16 innovative and creative solutions were needed now. Communication with staff would be key as would the capacity of the organisation to deliver change. It was also important to have fit for purpose governance arrangements. There would be an Informal Member Group on Transformation which would meet regularly to keep all Groups engaged with the process.

(2) The Chairman and Mrs Beer responded to comments and questions and the following points were highlighted:-

- The importance of communication with Members as well as staff was emphasised, this should be explained in a clear, jargon free way so that no one was under any illusion about the scale of the challenge facing the County Council.
- Mrs Beer explained that a series of 6 sessions had been held and 460 managers invited to attend, these had been used to start an early conversation about what "Facing the Challenge" needed to achieve. Feedback from these sessions would include in the paper being considered at County Council on 19 September 2013.
- In relation to the integration of services, staff would be mapped and moved across to the new service groups with the minimum of disruption and prior to the redesign of the services on offer. Training and support will be given, to staff involved in restructuring and there would be less HR process than in the past to enable a more flexible and agile outcome.
- Mrs Beer emphasised that there was no predetermination of the outcomes of market engagement and reviews. If staff wanted to be part of a social enterprise they should feed that into the review and get involved. Staff ideas throughout this process were welcomed.
- It was important for members to receive adequate training and development to enable them to carry out their roles and to support the transformation programme.

(3) RESOLVED that the presentation and comments made be noted.

18. Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14

(Item 9)

(1) Mr Royel introduced a report which proposed an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14 with appropriate consideration of supplementary guidance from Government. In response to questions from Members officers clarified the process

for agreeing severance payments which had been delegated to the Personnel Committee.

(2) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the pay statement for 2013/14 based upon last year's statement as attached in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed and recommended to County Council for approval; and
- (b) it be noted that compliance with the principles of transparency of senior salaries and severance packages are discharged via the Council's agreement to the senior structure and pay ranges and the compromise protocol as outlined in the report.

19. Policy Update

(Item 10)

(1) Mr Allwright presented a report on updates to the Whistleblowing and Deferred Redundancies policies and answered questions from Members.

(2) In relation to the Deferred Redundancies policies, the Committee discussed whether a maximum of 18 months for a deferring redundancy should be reduced.

(2) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised Whistleblowing Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.
- (b) the Deferred Redundancy Policy, as set out in Appendix 2 be approved subject to (a) being amended to state that redundancies would not be deferred for longer than 6 months, but that in exceptional circumstances this could be extended for a further 6 months with the approval of the relevant Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member and the Corporate Director Human Resources.

20. EXEMPT ITEM

RESOLVED 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 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

21. Interim Director of Waste

(Item 11)

(1) Mrs Beer introduced a report on the current arrangements for the post of Director of Waste Management and Resources, and sought approval from Personnel Committee to extend the current acting appointment beyond 6 months.

(2) RESOLVED that the current acting appointment for the post of Director of Waste Management and Resources be approved until the end of March 2014.