

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 12 June 2015.

PRESENT: Mr G Cooke (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Mr R H Bird (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr G K Gibbens (Substitute for Mr P B Carter, CBE), Ms A Harrison, Mr M Heale, Mr J D Simmonds, MBE, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr B J Sweetland.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr I Allwright (Employment Policy Manager), Mrs A Beer (Corporate Director Engagement, Organisation Design & Development) and Ms D Fitch (Democratic Services Manager (Council)).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

66. Membership
(Item A3)

It was noted that Mr M Heale had replaced Mr N Bond as a member of this Committee.

67. Minutes - 30 April 2015
(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2015 are correctly recorded and that they be signed as a correct record.

68. Discipline & Grievance Activity
(Item A5)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which updated the Committee on employee case work activity for the period 2014-15.

(2) The Chairman commended officers on the significant reduction in the time taken to resolve cases.

(3) Mr Allwright confirmed that when a decision was received from an employment tribunal, any lessons that could be learned from the case were considered and, if necessary, practices and/or policies were adapted.

(4) RESOLVED that the report of employee relations activity including senior officer appeal hearings be noted.

69. Annual Workforce Profile

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Allwright introduced a report which provided information on the staffing levels in the various sectors of the Authority's workforce, together with comparative information from recent years. The report also provided information on the diversity and demographics of the current workforce including breakdowns of staff by each of the diversity strands. Most comparators were from the end of the previous financial year, with the exception of the new Directorates where the comparators were from the beginning of the 2014-15 financial year.

(2) Mrs Beer and Mr Allwright answered questions and noted comments from the Committee which included the following:

- Mrs Beer explained that the spikes in the figures for staff leaving related in part to re-structuring and TUPE activities and gave the example of the facilities management contract.
- In relation to identifying possible instances where a person left the organisation as a result of bullying or harassment, Mr Allwright confirmed that he was fairly confident that this issue would have been dealt with at an early stage, with staff feeling able to raise this issue so that it can be addressed. Mrs Beer stated that the aim was to have an organisational culture where staff felt able to raise any issues of bullying and harassment and that these did not lead to their resignation.
- The importance of the public sector leading by example in relation to the employment of people from different minority groups was covered. As a result of the data presented those with a disability or who were BME (black and minority ethnic) was particularly discussed by Members.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

70. Protecting the vulnerable - an organisational review of our response to government guidance and lessons learnt elsewhere

(Item A7)

(1) Mrs Beer introduced a report which updated the Committee on actions in place to support KCC's compliance with Government guidance in regard to Child Sexual Exploitation; other protections for vulnerable people and lessons to be learnt from the Authority's own reviews of practice and lessons learnt elsewhere. The report included consideration of additional actions that would further strengthen KCC's response.

(2) Mrs Beer informed the Committee that, since the report had been published, for the first time there had been recruitment to a senior post which used the "Recruitment for Mindset" approach. This places assessment of the candidates' personal motivation and fit with the culture of the team at the heart of the recruitment decision.

(3) Mrs Beer answered questions and noted comments from the Committee which included the following:

- The need to ensure a strong focus in this important area was emphasised by Members.
- There was a need to consider how information could be best disseminated to Members so that they were all fully aware of their responsibilities in this area. It was essential that steps were taken to ensure that all Members attended briefing session on this area.
- Mrs Beer emphasised the importance of ensuring that the whole organisation, both Members and officers, had access to real data in order to avoid the risk of supporting a culture of denial.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further more detailed report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the aspects raised by Members at the meeting and in issues set out in the report, prior to this being considered by County Council.

71. Date of Next Meeting - 8 September 2015 - 2.00pm
(Item A8)

Noted

72. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public
(Item A9)

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.

73. Interim Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste
(Item B1)

(1) The Committee considered a report requesting the extension of the tenure of the interim Director, Highways, Transportation and Waste.

(2) RESOLVED that the secondment of Roger Wilkin to the role of Interim Director Highways, Transportation and Waste be extended until either the current postholder returns to the role or a permanent appointment is made by Members.