

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEMBER AND EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY 7 AUGUST 2014

Present: Councillor McLoughlin (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Burton, Daley, Greer,
Mrs Joy, McKay, Munford, Round, Sargeant and
Mrs Wilson

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

18. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that, in his opinion, the Report of the Chief Executive relating to Pension Discretion Policy – Update should be taken as an urgent item as it was implicit that the amended Pension Discretion Policy be submitted as soon as possible and that the feedback from Kent County Council (KCC) had only recently been received.

19. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

20. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

21. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Daley disclosed an interest in Agenda Item 9 – Pension Discretion Policy – Update as he was the Vice-Chairman on Kent County Council’s Superannuation Fund Committee.

22. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

23. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the decision contained in paragraph (c) of minute 15 which was amended to 'that reference be made in the staff policies to the flexibility of compassionate leave entitlement'.

25. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - PROPOSED CHANGES TO STAFF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

At its last meeting on 9th July 2014 the Panel requested that consideration of reducing annual leave entitlements for new employees and the removal of unsocial hours allowances be deferred pending a full Equality Impact Assessment. The Head of HR Shared Services advised the Panel that this had been undertaken and was set out at Appendix B to the report.

Responding to concerns from some Members that the reduction in annual leave entitlement would not be helpful in the retention of existing staff, the Head of HR Shared Services stated that the intention was not about downgrading the terms and conditions but an attempt to align the Council's terms and conditions to those 140 members of staff who worked within shared services. It had already caused some difficulties and this would make it easier for the staff concerned.

Members were of the view that existing staff should not be penalised under the new scheme and if they were promoted within the Council then they should remain on the existing annual leave scheme.

Members also agreed that the leave entitlement should be reduced to 30 days instead of 32 for new members of staff recruited on grades 14-16, only increasing to 32 days after five years' service.

In addition, Members felt that those staff who had completed 25 years of service should be entitled to an additional day's holiday in recognition of their loyalty to the Council, this is consistent with the council's existing arrangements.

Members enquired if there was a mechanism for the carry over of annual leave entitlement. The Head of HR Shared Services explained that this was granted in exceptional circumstances (up to a maximum of 5 days) by the Director/Chief Executive. Responding to an enquiry from a Member who asked if the Head of HR Shared Services could guarantee that requests were always granted, Dena Smart advised that in the 8 years she had been at the Council she had not known of any occasions where it had not been granted.

In responding to the issue of removing the unsocial hours allowance, concern was expressed by Members about the unsocial hours that the Civic Officers worked and due to the fact that one Civic Officer had left already, in terms of retention, it was important that the grade properly reflected the duties carried out. It was agreed that the post should be re-

evaluated as soon as possible.

During discussions it was noted that a quarterly Workforce Monitoring Report was produced by HR and Members felt it would be beneficial for this to be sent to them for information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the annual leave entitlements be reduced for new employees in line with the level negotiated with the trade unions;
- (b) That existing staff would remain on their current annual leave scheme if they were promoted through the grades;
- (c) That the initial leave entitlement under the new scheme be reduced from 32 to 30 for new staff being recruited on grades 14-16;
- (d) That when an employee reaches 25 years service, they be given an additional day's holiday in recognition of their loyalty and commitment;
- (e) That the Civic Officers posts be re-evaluated by the HAY Evaluation Panel at the beginning of September and the results be fed back to Members of this Panel;
- (f) That the Head of HR Shared Services circulate, on a quarterly basis, a copy of the Workforce Monitoring Report to this Panel; and
- (g) That the unsocial hours allowances are removed from the Council's allowances subject to the exceptions set out in the report to the Panel on 9th July 2014.

26. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - PENSION DISCRETION POLICY - UPDATE

The Head of HR Shared Services presented her report and explained that she had now received feedback from Kent County Council (KCC) on the Pension Discretion Policy which had previously been agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 9th July 2014.

KCC had highlighted the fact that one of the required rules had not been covered in the policy and as the Council's policy needs to be accurate to comply with the regulations it was necessary to submit an amendment.

RESOLVED:

That the updated Pension Discretion Policy as set out at Appendix A to the report, which included an additional reference to the regulations (TP Regulations 1(1)(c) of Schedule 2 – whether to allow the rule of 85 to be 'switched on' for members age 55-59) be agreed.

27. DURATION OF MEETING

16:30 to 18:10.