

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2018

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Chairman), and
Councillors D Burton, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper,
Newton, Perry, Springett and Mrs Wilson

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Cox, Powell and McLoughlin.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Cox
Councillor Newton for Councillor Powell

It was also noted that Councillor Newton would be late.

8. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

9. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

10. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

11. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

15. APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Caroline Matthews, the Democratic Services Officer which related to the appointment of Sub-Committees.

The Committee were advised that the Group Leaders had populated the grid in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the various Sub-Committee be appointed to as set out in Appendix A to the report.

16. EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs Bal Sandher, the Head of HR Shared Services presented a report which updated the Committee on sickness absence levels and mental illness. It also outlined the range of initiatives that had been put in place to proactively manage mental illness and promote wellbeing to improve the health of the workforce.

Councillor Newton arrived at 11.15 a.m. as this item was being discussed.

The Committee made the following observations:-

- That staff should not be put up to fail by taking on extra work when they are short staffed
- That the amount of activities the Council carry out should not increase unless the resource levels are considered adequate
- That there was a growing population but the Council had a shrinking workforce
- That budget cuts in future needed to address the impact that this would have on staff resources
- That the issue of inadequate staff resources should be taken up by Group Leaders at their Strategic Leaders Meeting with the Corporate Leadership Team

In response to a question raised by a Member, Mrs Sandher confirmed that some of the mental illness had been as a result of their existing

illness rather than work related.

Mrs Sandher also confirmed that she would distribute by email a copy of the quarterly reports that provide data on sickness to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the level of sickness absence and absence related to mental illness be noted.
2. That the causes of mental illness be noted.
3. That the on-going actions taken to monitor, manage and promote mental wellbeing across the Council be noted.

17. WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Bal Sandher, the Head of HR Shared Services which provided progress on the Workforce Strategy action plan.

The Head of HR Shared Services advised that there had been progress on all areas within the action plan.

The Committee noted that the gender pay differences at grades 13 and 14 was due to incremental points on the scale and the appointment rules in place. Newly appointed employees were expected to be appointed at the lowest point of the grade and would move up each year provided there was satisfactory performance. The majority of the female employees on these pay grades had been in post for a shorter time than their male counterparts and therefore had not progressed so far on the scale.

In response to questions by Members, Mrs Sandher advised that:-

- the delay in recruiting a new HR Manager had been due to the fact that the successful applicant had to give three months' notice to their existing employer.
- she was not aware of the circumstances as to why there had been a delay in recruiting a Democratic Services Officer.
- The reason the ethnic make up of the Authority was not compared to the local area was due to the data available not being up to date as the last census carried out was in 2011.
- That KCC had not offered up anything to replace the Annual Pension Briefings. At present the Council dealt with any queries from staff.

Members made the following observations:-

- That the gender pay difference should be continually monitored.
- That more Councillors should go along to the One Council Briefing to show their support to staff.

RESOLVED: That the progress of the actions as set out in the Workforce Strategy action plan as attached at Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

18. DURATION OF MEETING

11.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.