

Cherwell District Council

Joint Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Personnel Committee held at Springfields, Towcester, Northants NN12 6AE, on 13 July 2011 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)
Councillor Mary Clarke (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Caryl Billingham
Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Rupert Fordham
Councillor Rosie Herring
Councillor Victoria Irvine
Councillor G A Reynolds

Also Present: Councillor Stephen Clarke

Apologies for absence: Councillor George Parish

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager
Jo Atkinson, External Legal Advisor
Janet Beaumont, External HR Advisor

11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

13 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

14 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 **Review and Implementation of the Joint Senior Management Structure**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to consider feedback from the consultation period since 14 June 2011 and to finalise arrangements regarding recruitment and implementation. The Chief Executive outlined the consultation process where staff responses had been logged and were included as an appendix to the report, together with a comprehensive report received from the trade unions.

In introducing the report the Chief Executive advised that following a review by both councils Section 151 officers that it was in the best interest of both councils for staff to stay with their current employer. Any new external appointments this year should be employed by South Northamptonshire Council due to the lower employer pension costs. The employing authority for new shared staff would then be reviewed on an annual basis. It was agreed that no further work would be commissioned on this issue at this time.

It was clarified that the Joint Personnel Committee would appoint Directors and Heads of Service, with only the Section 151 and Monitoring Officer appointments requiring approval by both full Councils in September 2011.

With regard to special responsibility allowances, the review had highlighted a mixed picture with some authorities paying and others not. Information had been sought by accessing web sites and consulting both Hay and the National Local Government Employers (part of the Local government group). Where an allowance was paid there was no standard rate. Currently Cherwell District Council paid allowances of £5300 each to the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers, whilst South Northamptonshire Council paid £2500 each to the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers and the Chief Planning Officer. Following discussion Members agreed that a special responsibility allowance of £2,500 should be paid to the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers only irrespective of whether this role was held by a Director, Head of Service or other officer.

The Chief Executive reported that there had been some misinformation regarding assimilation and confirmed that appointments would be made having taken account of an employee's current salary and allowances as well as skills, qualifications and experience. It was noted that successful applicants would not be appointed below their current salary for a similar level role and the Committee had total flexibility to appoint within the scales as appropriate.

Within the salary scales increments would be £1000 for Heads of Service and the three further posts in scope and £2500 for Directors

The Chief Executive noted that during the consultation period there had been many queries and concerns regarding the salary ranges. Members considered this issue at length and noted the strength of feeling expressed.

Members acknowledged that expectations had been raised by the way the financial modelling had been developed for the approved business case

which, when compiled in December 2010, had used the highest salaries with a plussage of 10% for indicative purposes only. It was confirmed that there had never been an intention by Members to disadvantage valued staff members and therefore it was agreed that the upper level of the Head of Service pay scale should be raised to £73,000 and raised to £47,000 for the three further posts. It was noted there would not be any disadvantage to the current holders of Director posts in the proposed pay scales.

Members acknowledged the potential issues regarding the use of two different job evaluation schemes in the future and welcomed the offer from the trade unions to work jointly to address this in the medium term.

Members noted staff concerns regarding the titles of the three further posts in scope and in response agreed to change these to be titled 'manager'.

Members considered and adopted the voluntary redundancy/early retirement and application timetable as set out in the report. In view of the need to prepare a business case on voluntary redundancy and early retirement the Chief Executive confirmed she would be urging staff to apply earlier than the deadline of 30 August 2011 in order for information to be prepared in time for the meeting on 1 September 2011. It was however noted that due to these timescales information might not be available until the day before the meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the revisions to the ring fencing, which enabled all at risk staff to apply for all posts as previously recommended by the Committee, would be agreed by both Councils in July. It was agreed that 'at risk' letters would be issued to all staff in scope.

Lastly, it was confirmed that following a competitive tendering exercise with submissions from 7 companies, Veredus had been appointed to run the recruitment process and briefings would be arranged to support staff throughout the application and appointment process.

Resolved

- (1) (a) That in line with the business case presented to both Councils in December 2010, all staff appointed to the Joint Senior Management Team continue to be employed by their existing employer.
- (b) That any external appointments to the joint senior management team be employed by South Northamptonshire Council to take advantage of the reduced cost of employment.
- (c) That it be agreed future business cases for sharing services will determine who the employing authority should be at that point in time and based on employer pension costs, the merits contained within those business cases and the number of staff likely to be involved.
- (d) That future appointments that are not to the shared senior management team or part of further shared service initiatives continue to be employed by the authorities they will be working for. That the whole scale transfer of staff from one authority to another is not recommended at this stage.

- (e) That a full actuarial report not be sought at this time.
- (2) That it be noted that when making appointments to the new roles in the shared arrangements it will be imperative to bear these roles in mind and ensure future allocation of those roles either within the shared structure or to relevant posts within the Head of Service teams.
- (3) That a special responsibility allowance of £2,500 should be paid to the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer only irrespective of whether this role is held by a Director, Head of Service or other officer.
- (5) That the titles of the three further posts in scope be changed to 'manager' in light of the consultation responses.
- (6) That it be agreed that within the salary scales increments would be £1000 for Heads of Service and the three further posts in scope and £2500 for Directors.
- (7) That in light of the consultation responses the upper level of the Head of Service pay scale should be raised to £73,000 and for the three further posts raised to £47,000.
- (8) That the timetable and process set out in the annex to these minutes (as out in the minute book) be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.21 pm

Chairman:

Date: