

Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils

Joint Commissioning Committee

21 July 2016

Chief Executive Appraisal

Report of Assistant Director- Transformational Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider changes to the appraisal process for the Chief Executive.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the report and agree the proposed way forward in conducting the Chief Executive's appraisal as set out at 3.3.
- 1.2 To delegate responsibility and all functions relating to the Chief Executive's Appraisal to the Deputy Head of Paid Service and consequently not to appoint to the Joint Appraisal Sub-Committee.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Since the appointment of the Joint Chief Executive, the annual appraisal process and six month review have been conducted by committee (a sub-committee of the joint personnel committee and now a sub-committee of the Joint Commissioning Committee).
- 2.2 Whilst the appraisal process for the Chief Executive has been completed each year, concern has been expressed whether there is a better way that this process could be conducted that adds value, removes the process from the restrictions placed upon it through it being conducted by a committee and in a way which is strategic and proactive.
- 2.3 As a result at the 26 May 2016 meeting of the Joint Commissioning Committee, it was agreed that an appraisal sub-committee for 2016/17 would not be appointed pending a review of the process. This report presents the outcome of that review,

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Since the meeting of 26 May 2016 the Chief Executive, the Leaders of both councils and Sam Maher (East Midlands Councils) have met to review the current appraisal process. Appraisals are normally conducted between an employee and their line manager and allow for reflection on achievement with regard to the previous year's objectives, a review of year, consideration of performance against role competencies, any external assessment, the setting of objectives for the coming year and any other issues which the employee and line manager wish to raise and record. The process is essentially a human resources process and does not lend itself well to be conducted by a committee which can be uncomfortable for both those appraising being appraised. At the most serious level the council should ensure that its adopted process is fair and robust and protects itself from any potential legal challenge such as constructive dismissal. It has been felt for some time that the current process is somewhat lacking and does not provide maximum benefit for all parties.
- 3.2 Unlike other employees, the Chief Executive does not have a direct line manager; she reports to councillors as a whole, this has resulted in the appraisal being carried out by a committee. Unfortunately by their very nature committees do not provide a suitable forum for an appraisal and with 8 councillors comprising the committee this has become unwieldy and can lose focus. It is clear that any adopted process should involve fewer participants but should enable the views and feedback from members to be included in the process in a structured way. Again as all employees report either directly or indirectly it is not appropriate for an officer to advise the appraisal committee or to conduct the process, therefore East Midlands Councils have done so, initially through a contract and now included within the membership fee paid. It was felt in the review that this was a strength of the current process due to the impartiality and 'honest broker' role this provided, however it was felt that this role could be expanded and enhanced.
- 3.3 As a result of the review, the following process is proposed to the committee:

Formally all functions relating to the Chief Executive's Appraisal will be delegated by the Committee to the Deputy Head of Paid Service

The appraisal should continue to be conducted in March and with a six month review in October. All dates will be arranged by East Midlands Councils through the PA to the Deputy Head of Paid Service.

Appraisal process

- 1) Chief Executive prepares her draft submission on how she has achieved her targets and met her role profile in the competency framework (this element would replace the 360 degree appraisal) and suggests targets for next year based on agreed corporate priorities (agreed at Feb councils).
- 2) Meeting between Chief Executive and Director of East Midlands Councils to prepare for appraisal, discuss draft and critical friend approach. Draft revised to finalised version following meeting.
- 3) Meeting with opposition group leaders and Director of East Midlands Councils to discuss draft and any issues and themes to be discussed at the appraisal

- 4) Meeting between Leaders of the Councils and Director of East Midlands Councils to discuss draft and any issues, issues raised by opposition group leaders and themes to be discussed at the appraisal
- 5) Informal preparation discussion between Chief Executive and Director of East Midlands Councils
- 6) Appraisal meeting with Leaders of the Councils, Chief Executive and Director of East Midlands Councils
- 7) Director of East Midlands Councils drafts outcomes, agreed with Leaders of the Councils and then passed to Chief Executive for her comment.
- 8) Final document agreed and filed by Deputy Head of Apid Service, summary of outcomes and objectives circulated to all group leaders.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The proposals in this report are designed to ensure that the councils have in place an effective and robust appraisal process.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 Initial consultation and discussion has taken place with the Leaders of the Councils, Chief Executive and East Midlands Councils. If the committee is minded to agree the recommendations formal consultation with The Chief Executive on the proposed process would then be commenced by East Midlands Councils, on behalf of the councils.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To agree the recommendations as set out in the report

Option 2: To amend the recommendations as set out in the report

Option 3: To reject the recommendations as set out in the report. This is not recommended, as the current appraisal process is not felt to be in the best interests of the Chief Executive or Council.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer - 0300 003 0106
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Legal Implications

7.2 These are no legal implications arising from this report.

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Risk Implications

7.3 The proposals set out in this report mitigate risk to the council through ensuring that the Chief Executive has a robust appraisal that is both fair and constructive.

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

None directly

Lead Councillor

Councillor Ian McCord, Leader of the Council, SNC
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council, CDC

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
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