

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27 January 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	A Bridson (Chair)	
	Councillors	JE Green P Davies P Kearney	M McLaughlin L Rennie
<u>Deputies</u>	Councillors	G Davies (for S Foulkes) D Mitchell (for M Johnston)	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillor	S Holbrook	

52 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were requested to declare whether they had an interest, either personal or prejudicial, in any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

Councillor Rennie declared a personal interest in minute 55 (Occupational Health Contract) by virtue of her appointment on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue and Authority.

Councillor McLaughlin declared a personal interest in minute 60 (Allegations against Employees) by virtue of her having sat on a related Appeals Sub-Committee.

53 MINUTES

The Committee was requested to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 2010.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 2010 be approved.

54 AGILE WORKING

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which sought approval of the Council's Agile Working Policy.

The Policy would support the Council by facilitating a more diverse range of working models away from traditional fixed desk arrangements that enabled increased productivity, greater efficiency and rationalisation of office accommodation. There were a number of employees and teams across the Council that had already implemented agile working arrangements. However, an agreed and detailed policy framework to support agile working was not currently in place. The Agile Working policies provided support to managers and employees who were involved in such arrangements and provided a framework of best practice for the implementation of future arrangements.

Attached to the report were detailed policies which provided more information and guidance to managers and employees on the following models:

- Home Working
- Mobile Working
- Hot Desking

It was anticipated that employees might work a combination of the above models within an agile working arrangement. The Director clarified that full consultation had taken place with the Trades Unions and in response to Members' comments assured the Committee that it would be one of the tools used to help with the rationalisation of office space.

Resolved – That the Council's new Agile Working Policy and supporting documents be approved.

55 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CONTRACT

Further to minute 45 (23/11/10) the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which updated the Committee on the progress of the future service provision for the Occupational Health Contract.

The Head of HR and OD informed the meeting that it would not be possible at this time to proceed with a possible procurement option of a joint service with the Merseyside Fire Service.

Responding to comments from Members the Head of HR and OD assured the Committee that it was the intention to manage rather than reduce demand for the service by such things as more pro-actively signposting employees to the Employee Assistance Programme for services that could be provided via the programme where the service was paid for at a flat rate.

With a significant proportion of the contract coming from schools, the Interim Director of Children's Services confirmed that schools were currently being invited to renew their interest, although academy schools might well make their own arrangements.

Resolved –

(1) That, having concluded the options to take forward the future delivery of the Occupational Health service, officers continue with the re-tendering process to ensure effective service continuity.

(2) That officers reduce the current expenditure on the contract in place, through managing demand and accessing more cost effective delivery methods.

56 UPDATE ON MANAGING WORKFORCE CHANGE AND REDEPLOYMENT

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report providing an update on the on-going management of workforce change and outlined progress to

date on the successful redeployment of employees throughout the Council in support of the efficiency programme.

Since the Employment and Appointments Committee in September 2010 (minute 30 refers) when there were 63 people on the register, 11 employees had taken the opportunity to leave the Council's employment by Early Voluntary Retirement or Voluntary Severance. A further nine people were due to leave within the next six months. Further work was also underway to identify if there were "bumped" opportunities, to allow the release of other employees to create redeployment opportunities for those employees currently on the redeployment register.

In December 2010 Council agreed a number of resolutions recommended by the Council's Cabinet. Following agreement of those resolutions, 700 employees' requests for Early Voluntary Retirement / Severance were subsequently agreed. Approximately a further 220 employees affected by the resolutions were also going to be given an opportunity to apply for release by Early Voluntary Retirement / Voluntary Severance, on the same terms as those who had previously applied in October.

Responding to Members' comments, the Head of HR and OD stated that the 220 were in addition to 1100 employees agreed and that she could supply a list of the posts. They had until 31 January to apply and decisions would be made in the next few weeks.

Councillor P Davies expressed concern over the speed at which these changes were being made and the viability of services with fewer staff being left to deliver them.

The Leader of the Council expressed his thanks to all staff involved in the EVR / severance exercise and it was -

Resolved – That the report be noted and the congratulations of this Committee be conveyed to all the staff involved in the EVR / severance process.

57 **MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report updating the Committee on the current attendance management position.

A breakdown of sickness absence figures for Quarter 3 and comparative data for 2006/7, 2007/8, 2008/9 and 2009/10, by quarter and by full year, was shown in appendix 1 to the report. Sickness levels for Quarter 3 (2.70 days) showed an improvement against both previous years (2.92 and 3.17). The projected figures for 2010/11 had been calculated at 9.80 days against a target for the year of 9.8 days.

Wirral's health and well being framework, 'Fit4Wirral' continued to develop with the launch this month of the Fit4Wirral webpage: a 'one stop shop' for all health and well being advice, information and events across the Council delivered in conjunction with a range of partners including NHS Wirral.

The Head of HR and OD acknowledged that sickness absence figures for quarter 4 might show an increase due to the recent winter influenza outbreaks.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

58 **APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which sought the Committee's views on the options available to appoint a Chief Executive, following the retirement of the Council's permanent Chief Executive in September 2010.

The Council currently had an Interim Chief Executive appointed for up to nine months, ending on 1 June 2011. There was therefore a need for permanent arrangements to be made to ensure that the organisation continued to deliver its priorities in the future.

The report outlined the key issues such as the:

- Decision making process
- Type of contract
- Salary
- Possibility of a shared Chief Executive
- Advertisement
- Initial assessment and shortlist

The Committee debated the options and on a motion by the Leader of the Council seconded by Councillor Mitchell, it was -

Resolved –

(1) That a proportionate Sub-Committee be established of 5 Members in the ratio 2 Conservative, 2 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat consisting of Councillors J Green, L Rennie, S Foulkes, P Davies and S Holbrook, with deputies.

(2) That, given the significant challenges facing the Council over the next few years it is not appropriate to consider sharing a Chief Executive with another local authority and that therefore the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, in consultation with Members of the Sub-Committee, is instructed to take immediate steps to advertise nationally the permanent post of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) at a salary of circa. £130,000.

(3) That the Sub-committee be given delegated authority to approve the following matters:

- (a) Advertising arrangements in the Sunday Times, Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal;**
- (b) Job Description and Person Specification;**
- (c) The timetable;**
- (d) The selection process; and**
- (e) A robust performance management process for the Chief Executive**

and to make the recommendation to Council as to the person to be appointed as the Council's Chief Executive.

(4) That no external consultants are engaged to manage or support the selection process, but that a chief executive is approached to act as an external advisor and to provide support and advice to the process and the Sub-Committee as requested.

59 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

60 **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided details of allegations of serious or gross misconduct made against employees and advised of the action taken in each case.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

61 **EARLY VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT / VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE REQUESTS**

The Interim Chief Executive submitted a report which sought the Committee's approval for the release of those employees who were on spinal column point (SCP) 49 and over, through Early Voluntary Retirement/Severance (EVR/VS) from 31 January 2011 to 30 June 2011, and to approve the deletion of posts, as a result, of those posts of SCP 49 and over.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Rennie, that –

“(1) This Committee approves the release of 22 employees on SCP 49 and over, through EVR with Voluntary Severance.

(2) This Committee approves the deletion of 15 posts on SCP 49 and over and notes that seven posts on SCP49 and over will not be deleted, but that posts lower in the hierarchy will be deleted which will produce “bumped” savings.”

It was moved as an amendment by Councillor P Davies, seconded by Councillor G Davies, that –

“In the absence of further details on the implications for services and information on restructuring, this Committee defers agreement on the release of these posts until such time as this Committee can carry out a proper scrutiny exercise.”

The amendment was put and lost (3:5).

The motion was put and carried (5:3) (Councillors G Davies, P Davies and McLaughlin voting against)

Resolved (5:3) (Councillors G Davies, P Davies and McLaughlin voting against)

–

(1) That this Committee approves the release of 22 employees on SCP 49 and over, through EVR with Voluntary Severance; and

(2) That this Committee approves the deletion of 15 posts on SCP 49 and over and notes that seven posts on SCP49 and over will not be deleted, but that posts lower in the hierarchy will be deleted which will produce “bumped” savings.