

# EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

Present: Councillor AER Jones (Chair)

Councillors P Davies L Rennie  
G Davies P Gilchrist  
AR McLachlan

Deputies Councillors W Clements (In place of JE Green)  
B Mooney (In place of M McLaughlin)

## 6 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were requested to declare whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in the item on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

No such declarations were made.

## 7 MINUTES

The Committee were requested to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of 25 July 2016.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of 25 July, 2016, be approved.**

## 8 CHIEF OFFICER STRUCTURE: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive proposing a Chief Officer structure for Children's Services following the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection. It was reported that the Director of Children's services would report directly to the Chief Executive on an interim basis.

The report introduced by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development set out the issues and risks associated with grading, recruitment and retention of senior Children's Services management posts.

She indicated that recommendation (2) as detailed within the report was a recommendation outlined within the Ofsted report as the department had been unable to recruit and retain the post on a permanent basis and it was felt that this would provide the longer term stability required for the service.

A benchmarking exercise had been undertaken and that compared to other local authorities, Wirral Council needed to consider a higher grade for the role to attract someone with the experience required.

The Director of Children's Services (DCS) highlighted the significant work ahead for the department and stressed the importance of retaining a person who would take Children Services forward. To improve outcomes for vulnerable Children children's social care and early help and intervention needed to work together to prevent children, wherever possible, needing social care. Going forward there would be an increased focus on prevention and intervention to reduce the number of children in care. The approach in Children's services needed to address the needs of children across the spectrum of vulnerability.

The DCS also referred to benchmarking the structures of other Councils such as Knowsley and Sunderland who were in a similar position. The Chief Executive commented that in looking at what had worked well elsewhere it was evident that the Chief Executive had played an active role in the improvement journey; therefore as set out within the recommendations to the report, the Director of Children's Services would report straight to him.

In relation to the recommendations set out within the report the Chief Executive explained that he felt this was the right structure for Children's Services at Wirral and it was imperative that Wirral now secured the right people for the posts. He further emphasised that the proposed titles of the post and salaries were comparative in the market to attract the right people.

In response to a Member's question, the Chief Executive indicated that the structure would be reviewed at a later stage, following the longer term delivery of the Improvement Plan.

The Chair indicated that he was very supportive of the recommendations and agreed with the need to appoint the right person with experience to the post.

In response to a Member's concern, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development indicated that the retained recruitment consultants had a good national reputation and would conduct a wide ranging search.

Feedback from the recruitment consultants has previously been that the pay at a senior level was not always at a level to compete in the market.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development indicated that the salaries as detailed within the report were comparative with other Authorities and it was felt that this was pitched at a level to attract the right people for the posts at this time, although it was a very competitive marketplace.

A Member commented that the post once appointed needed to be adequately supported and that as Councillors they were all corporate parents and therefore had a responsibility to ensure the department and its senior officers felt supported.

The Chair stressed the need for a regional agreement across the Northwest on salaries for these posts and that the relevant organisations needed to agree this to avoid Councils having to race against neighbouring authorities.

On a motion by Councillor P Davies, seconded by Councillor McLachlan, it was -

**Resolved (unanimously) – That**

- (1) the revised line management arrangements for Children’s Services in the new operating model as detailed in appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (2) the re-grading and re-designation of the vacant post ‘Assistant Director: Children’s Care Services’ to Deputy Director: Children’s Care Services to ensure the level of remuneration reflected the size and scope of the role in line with market rates, will attract high quality candidates and supports retention to provide the longer term stability required for the service be approved;  
(Grade D2 Salary range: £82,741 to £91,935)**
- (3) the re-grading and re-designation of the current post of Assistant Director: Children’s Services to Deputy Director: Children’s Services. This will ensure the level of remuneration reflects the size, scope and influence of this role in also provide a long term stability required for the service be approved;  
(Grade D2 Salary range £82,741 to £91,935)**
- (4) a politically proportionate Appointments Panel, in accordance with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 2 of the report for the post of Deputy Director: Children’s Care Services to be advertised internally and externally and to commence the recruitment process immediately be established; and**
- (5) the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development be authorised to commence a recruitment exercise for the post of Deputy Director: Children’s Care Services.**