

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL



MINUTES of a meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held in the Ancholme Meeting Room at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 30 July 2013 commencing at 3.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Jackie Brockway (Chairman)
Councillor David Cotton (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Alan Caine
Councillor Giles McNeill
Councillor Jeff Summers
Councillor Anne Welburn

Apologies: Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Reg Shore

Membership: No substitutes were appointed for the meeting

In Attendance:
Manjeet Gill Chief Executive
Emma Redwood Team Manager – People and Organisational Development
Katie Coughlan Governance and Civic Officer

5 MINUTES

(a) Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee - 25 April 2012

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held on 25 April 2012 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

(b) Meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee - 20 May 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Chief Officer Employment Committee held on 20 May 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

6 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were made.

7 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8 FUTURE CHIEF OFFICER ARRANGEMENTS (COEC.03 13/14)

Members gave consideration to a report which highlighted the challenges ahead and the future requirements of Chief Officers (Directors) in the Council. The report further outlined proposals for interim arrangements, to ensure business continuity at a time when two thirds of the Council's responsibilities were not under the remit of the Director. Finally the report outlined proposals as to how the Council could establish a future leadership structure to deliver the Council's commercial priorities at a time when £3 million had to be cut from existing budgets over the next three years.

In presenting the report to the Committee, the Chief Executive outlined the various stages of the process, stressing that this was Stage 1, this being a proposal to re-structure the Chief Officer level of the Council based on where the business is, future challenges and making the structure fit for purpose. This would be followed by a 30 day consultation period, after which, subject to this Committee approving the proposed structure post consultation, discussions would then turn to how this may affect individuals. For this reason it was stressed that the Committee should refrain from discussing their work with potentially affected Officers.

By way of context and background, the Chief Executive outlined at length the challenges for the future; the need for a more flexible management approach; the ways in which the Heads of Service and Team Managers roles had been developed over recent years and how the Council again needed to adapt to be able to continue to meet the continued pressures.

Members were advised on the consultation and stakeholder engagement which had taken place to date.

Finally the Chief Executive outlined in detail the proposal for a two Director Structure, outlining the role she envisaged each would play and their key functions, these were set out in Section 4.1 report.

Detailed and lengthy discussion then ensued as to the pro's and con's of the proposed structure.

The idea of a Commercial Director, charged with not managing day to day services but focussed on delivery of big ticket items, maximising returns on assets and identifying income streams was very positively received. However

the Committee did express concern that the remit of the second Director was too large for one individual, especially with regard to concerns and a recognition by committee that more work was needed to develop the capability of the levels below directors.

There was a suggestion that a three Director model may give the organisation more stability and some Members referred to recent articles in national publications which demonstrated stripping capacity at a senior level in a bid to generate savings was often at the detriment to the organisation.

Furthermore there was concern that if both the Chief Executive and the Commercial Director were working predominately outside of the organisation, the strain would be too great for one individual and there was view that there needed to be a senior figure keeping an eye on the home front.

In responding, the Chief Executive again outlined the roles of both Team Managers and Heads of Service and how these levels of the organisation would support delivery and day to day management of services. The proposal had been developed bearing in mind the need to achieve £3million savings and to demonstrate value for money. The Chief Executive indicated that she was confident the proposed structure could deliver and that at levels below Directors there would need to be consideration regarding remuneration which would be benchmarked in line with due process

Again members expressed the importance of their earlier message in the need to develop the capability and the organisation at levels below Directors. Whilst the Committee acknowledged this was not within the remit there was a general consensus that it would undoubtedly govern and affect the best structure for the top tier of the organisation.

Responding to Members' comments and concerns the Chief Executive indicated that she had considered a 3 Director model which would include a Director of Resources type post. It was estimated that the role would cost circa £80k.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Executive indicated that the cost of the overall management re-Structuring exercise would save circa £150k. However further work was needed in this area and would be subject to the outcome of the consultation. It was stressed that Structure 1 (2 Directors) versus Structure 2 (3 Directors) would reduce the savings by approx. £50k as it would reduce the need for external consultancy spend or other interim capacity, and overall, with either structure, savings would be achieved. On that basis the Committee were unanimously in agreement that there was mileage in putting both structures out for consultation to ascertain the views of the rest of the organisation.

Discussion then turned to proposals relating to an interim Director to assist the Chief Executive until such time as permanent posts were filled. The remit of the post was outlined to the Committee together with details of the service area for which the post would have responsibility. Candidate information,

including previous experience and applicable day rates was tabled for Members consideration.

It was proposed and seconded that Candidate 2 be offered the interim post based on her previous experience, competitive rates, and her having been tried and tested within the organisation.

This led Members to question the lead-in time on appointing to the permanent positions. It was envisaged that this could take up to possibly 6 – 9 months, but would be dependent on a number of factors, for example, such as the employment status of the successful candidate (s).

Whilst accepting recruitment and selection at a senior level was a lengthy process, some Members expressed concern that in the interim the Commercial agenda was not been driven. This was viewed as a critical role given the current financial pressures and economic climate and Members were of the view that a further interim post may be required to drive this agenda in the short term.

On that basis it was

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the draft structure outlined in Appendix B be approved for consultation;
- (b) a further draft structure based on a 3 Director model (including a Director of Resources type post) also be released for consultation purposes and the results from both (a) and (b) be fed back to the Committee at its next meeting;
- (c) the arrangements for an interim Director until permanent posts are filled be approved;
- (d) the Chief Executive explore options for interim arrangements to assist with the commercial and financial pressures and present her findings to the Committee at its next meeting; and
- (e) the next meeting of the Committee be held on 10 September 2013 commencing at 3.00 pm (this was subsequently amended to 30 September at 3.30 pm in light of the consultation period having been extended).

The meeting concluded at 5.35 pm

Chairman