

Chief Officers' Employment Panel

Minutes

27 July 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor Graham Henson

Councillors: Marilyn Ashton
Stephen Greek
Paul Osborn
Varsha Parmar
Natasha Proctor
Christine Robson

78. Membership

RESOLVED: To note that there were no nominee Members in attendance.

79. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

80. Minutes

That the minutes of the meeting of the Chief Officers' Employment Panel held on 19 May 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

Resolved Items

81. The post of Head of Change and Flexible Futures

Members received a report from the Corporate Director of Resources which set out details of a new post of Head of Change and Flexible Futures and sought approval for a potential salary level over £100,000.

The Corporate Director of Resources outlined the content of the report and explained that the matter was before Members as the role had been evaluated at D1, the salary band of which straddled £100,000 and therefore required the approval of the Panel. However, as this role would subsume the current position of Head of Change and was fixed term, the cost to the Council would only be an additional £18,000 a year for two years. He advised that the postholder would lead the introduction of flexible futures, which was critically important to the Council, and augment further governance around project management. Flexible futures had already commenced, and the Head of Change had been undertaking the additional role and had been receiving an honorarium payment. If successful at the ring-fenced interview, he would be appointed to the role for the fixed term of 2 years. In response to a Member's question as to whether the successful candidate would be appointed at the bottom of the salary band as was usual practice, he added that this would depend on their previous experience, but that the additional cost of £18,000 was the difference between MG4 and D1.

A Member sought clarification as to the number of Directors currently employed within the Resources directorate as he was concerned that the management structure was top heavy and funding could be moved to help deliver front-line services. The Corporate Director advised that there were currently four Directors on the salary scale at D2/3, two of which were statutory posts and all led large teams providing critical services to the Council and the borough. With this new role, if agreed, there would be two heads of service at D1. He reiterated that the post had been evaluated at D1 and if this was not agreed by the Panel, he would need to split the role and perhaps undertake some of the role himself which would place at risk the successful delivery of not just Flexible Futures, but also the delivery of all Corporate Services.

Further to the response from the Corporate Director in relation to the number of Directors within the Resources directorate, another Member expressed concern and discomfort at the costs of the Council's top-level staffing structure and questioned the lack of current capacity to deliver flexible futures. Another Member stated that the programme required individuals with the requisite skills to deliver it hence the request before the Panel.

A Member questioned whether the postholder would have any freedoms/flexibility in terms of delivering a programme that had already been started and was advised that there were two possible scenarios; firstly, the ringfenced employee was successful at interview and had already provided input and, secondly, if another candidate were to be successful, they would undertake their role in line with the agree vision and strategy; this was normal practice for programme managers. Additionally, there was considerable work to be done in terms of the decant from the Civic Centre and development of the detail of Forward Drive, and the successful candidate would have input into this. The Member expressed the view that this work should have been completed before the Council's Accommodation Strategy had been approved. The Corporate Director replied that the Accommodation Strategy laid out the overall strategy. The Head of Flexible Futures would be involved in its detailed implementation.

Three Members indicated that they would not support the proposal as they did not agree with the Accommodation Strategy and the decant from the Civic Centre to Forward Drive. In addition, they expressed the view that the proposal did not result in extra capacity but increased costs.

RESOLVED: That the post of Head of Change and Flexible Futures be allocated to the grade of D1, the top point of which exceeded £100,000.

[Note: Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Stephen Greek and Paul Osborn wished to be recorded as having voted against the above resolution].

82. Exclusion of Press and Public

A Member indicated that he did not agree that the press and public should be excluded for item 6, Severance Payment of £100,000 or Greater.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) for the reasons set out below:

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Reason</u> |
|-------------|--|--|
| 6. | Severance package of £100,000 or greater | Information under paragraphs 1 and 3 in that the report contains information relating to an individual and information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). |

83. Severance Package of £100,000 or greater

Members received the confidential report of the Corporate Director, People, which sought approval for severance payments where the total amount concerned was greater than £100,000.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the payment of the contractual and statutory payments to the employee whose details were set out in the report be approved.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 3.02 pm, closed at 3.42 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Graham Henson
Chair