

## Personnel Committee

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 June 2013 at 2.00 pm in Room 519 at County Hall

#### Present:

Mr B Borrett  
Mr R Coke  
Mr C Jordan  
Mr G Nobbs  
Dr M Strong

#### Also Present:

Mrs S Farrell  
Ms A Gibson

Democratic Support Manager  
Head of Human Resources and  
Organisational Development  
Reward Manager  
Employment Consultant, Davidson &  
Partners

Mr R Graham-Leigh  
Mr H Davidson

#### 1. Election of Chairman

Mr G Nobbs was elected Chairman for the ensuing Council year.

#### 2. Election of Vice-Chairman

3. Mr R Coke was elected Vice Chairman for the ensuing Council year.

#### 4. Apologies

There were no apologies.

#### 5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 4. Declarations of Interests

There were no interests.

#### 5. Public Sector Pensions - Update

5.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 6), which set out the latest position in relation to changes in the public sector pensions scheme.

5.2 During the meeting the following key points were raised:

- It was confirmed that the Council was working to a national timeframe

regarding the introduction of new statutory pension schemes.

- The Committee were advised that, regarding workplace pension reforms and auto enrolment, part time staff were included. Officers confirmed that a separate note would be sent to the Committee with information on the earnings threshold which triggered their enrolment.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted

## **6. Localism Act – Pay Policy Statement**

6.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 7), which set out a revised pay policy statement for 2013/14, following revised statutory guidance.

6.2 During the meeting the following key points were raised:

- It was noted that, on first impression, the proposed amendments to the Pay Policy statement seemed to pay no regard to democratic accountability and concern was raised that severance payments, in particular, should be constrained and redundancy payments capped. In reply, officers confirmed that the Council adhered to the statutory guidance provisions for such payments, with the maximum statutory limit for payments being 30 weeks' pay, dependent on length of service, and all payments to staff were in accordance with what the Council was contractually obliged to pay.
- With regard to paragraph 8.7 of the statement, it was suggested that severance payments should only be made after discussion with the Personnel Committee as there was a public perception that overly generous payments were being awarded which members wished to correct by closer scrutiny. Officers explained that the early consideration of severance payments and the total package for the redundancy of a member of staff was vital in the planning of services changes as, if the cost to the organisation was too great, there was an option not to delete a post of such financial significance. It was explained that members were routinely consulted on service changes affecting senior posts and the Head of Finance, Acting Head of Human Resources and Cabinet Member were required to jointly sign off large severance payments with payments only being made in accordance with contractual obligations. For high earners, there was a need to ensure payments were made in line with the requirements of the Localism Act and the need for transparency and accountability.
- Having considered the above, the Chairman proposed that, in future, the Personnel Committee be consulted where severance payments over £100,000 were considered; and this was supported by the Committee.

## **RESOLVED**

To recommend to the County Council that the Pay Policy Statement 2013-14 be confirmed, subject to an amendment to ensure that the members of the Personnel Committee be consulted by the Acting Managing Director where severance payments over £100,000 were considered, and that the Statement be published as soon as possible thereafter.

### **7 Director of Public Health**

7.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 8) recommending a grade for the vacant post of Director of Health be set at a level to attract suitable candidates.

7.2 During the meeting the following key points were raised:

- It was noted that market supplements were being offered by other local authorities to be sure that pay levels equated to those received by consultants in the National Health Service, thus ensuring good quality appointments to this important post.
- Evidence indicated that there was a small and decreasing pool of potential candidates in this field and, unless the correct rate was applied to the position, the authority might not attract suitable candidates for this crucial post for Norfolk.

## **RESOLVED**

To approve:

1. a grade of Scale Q for the post of Director of Public Health
2. in the event of appointment of an NHS consultant to the post of Director of Public Health, the appointment to this position on an NHS Consultant contract and pay provisions.

### **8 Appointment of Managing Director**

8.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 12), noting that the agenda had indicated this to be a not for publication report, however, legal advice had confirmed its release into the public domain. The report set out proposals for the process and appointment to this role. In presenting the report it was confirmed that, at Section 3, there remained four and not three shortlisted candidates for this position.

As part of the presentation, members welcomed Hamish Davidson, Executive Search Consultant from Davidson & Partners to the meeting.

8.2 During the meeting the following key points were raised:

- The appointment of a Managing Director was the direction in which most public sector posts were now heading.
- All four candidates remained interested in the position of Managing Director.
- Key to any appointment was the relationship the Managing Director

would have with the Leader of the Council as there was a need for good rapport.

- It was felt unfair to expect people applying for this post under the current model to be expected to be put forward for what would be a new form of governance chosen from a range of different models coming up within the year.
- Savings were being made from holding open the vacancy of the Chief Executive post and, for the present time, this was the preferred way forward. Current arrangements with officers holding key posts were working well and it was preferable to bide time until a new system of governance was in place before this post was filled.
- It was commented that a lot would be happening over the coming year for there not to be an appointment to this post and not have a dedicated person giving leadership and direction. It was added that there was a real potential for a reduction in service delivery and in the performance of services that the Council offered arising from a decision not to fill this post. This comment was put to the meeting in the strongest terms.
- The point was also put that it would be foolhardy to proceed with an appointment at a time of such change. It was noted that there could be a shadow governance model operating from the autumn but this was not a given at this time.
- Members discussed the impact on improvements to the Council's performance, arising from the Enterprising Norfolk Programme, and it was confirmed that more effective ways of working and finding value for money in all that the Council did continued to be of significant importance. However, there was no requirement for the employment of a Managing Director to produce such outcomes. More important was the need to wait and see how the Council would be run. The role of MD had been put forward by the previous Administration. Times were different now and a new Administration was in office. It was reasonable to pause before making a decision on this appointment.
- It was noted that candidates coming forward now would be looking for confirmation of the long term strategic goals for the authority and assurances as to financial viability. It would not be a case of being put off by changes in governance but of needing to understand better the way forward and see a certainty of direction.
- The Chairman proposed that Option 3, as set out in the report, be accepted, namely; to review the Managing Director model in the light of the aims and objectives of the new Council. He advised that his wish was to delay this appointment, in the knowledge that the current arrangements were working well and financially beneficial to the authority, and he considered there would be greater certainty with the direction of governance arrangements towards the end of the year.

## **RESOLVED**

To recommend to Council that:

1. The role of Managing Director be reviewed in the light of the aims and objectives of the new Council and when revised governance arrangements have been agreed
2. To delay the appointment process until the role has been reviewed.

## **9. Exclusion of the Public**

- 9.1 The Personnel Committee was advised, with regard to agenda items 11 and 13, that the Committee needed to consider whether to exclude the public for the consideration of this information. The Acting Head of Human Resources presented the Public Interest Tests, as required by the 2006 Access to Information Regulations, for the consideration of the Committee as follows:

### Item 11:

This report sets out sensitive commercial information relating to companies. It also contains information about the recruitment strategy which if released could compromise the recruitment process. This assessment has been reached in light of the guidance provided by the Head of Law.

### Item 13

This report includes sensitive information relating to the terms of employment of County Council employees. The release of this information would prejudice possible forthcoming negotiations and would therefore not be in the public interest. This assessment has been reached in light of the guidance provided by the Head of Law.

### **RESOLVED**

That the reports be excluded from public discussion and disclosure.

## **10. Recruitment of Director of Public Health**

- 10.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 11), which advised on the background and process of appointing a Director of Public Health for Norfolk.

### **RESOLVED**

That the recommendations contained within the exempt report be approved.

## **11. Pay Negotiations**

- 11.1 The Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Human Resources (agenda item 13), which summarised the present position in national pay negotiations.

### **RESOLVED**

That the recommendations contained within the exempt report be approved.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm

**CHAIRMAN**