

North Yorkshire County Council

Chief Officer Appointment Committee

Appointment of Director of Social Services

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Members about issues to be addressed in appointing a successor to Mrs Rosemary Archer.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Director of Social Services post will become vacant at the end of June. Following discussion with Executive Members and Scrutiny Chairs and Spokespersons, there is agreement that the County Council should seek to appoint a successor on a fixed term contract of 3 years. This period of appointment will be sufficient to cover the period during which Children's Services will need to be reorganised and in the event of local government reorganisation in the County should take us to the point at which a new unitary structure would be introduced.

3.0 Issues

- 3.1 For an appointment at this level it is usual to involve a recruitment consultancy in addition to advertising. This may be particularly important in the present case because of the uncertainties stemming from Local Government Review and from the Children's Bill which may reduce levels of interest. Following soundings, we have approached three consultancies – Gatenby Sanderson, Veredus and Tribal and expect to receive their bids on 23 April. These will be reported to the Committee. A copy of the invitation to tender is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 Members will see that the post is described as Corporate Director, Social Services. This reflects the wider corporate responsibilities which Chief Officer posts should now undertake and was prompted by discussions at the Structures Working Group.
- 2.3 In considering whether to proceed with an appointment I sought advice from one recruitment consultancy (Gatenby Sanderson) on the likely strength of field and how this would be effected by term of appointment and salary. A copy of their advice is attached at **Appendix 2**. As for terms of appointment, they suggest an open ended approach to enable us to negotiate with individuals according to our or their requirements. In the current circumstances, however, and given some of the interest we believe to be present, I think a fixed term offer is more clear cut and better reflects our needs and intentions. We should, however, make it clear that it could be renewed or extended by mutual agreement.

2.4 As for salary level, it is clear both from the consultant's advice and from more general salary survey work – **see Appendix 3** – that North Yorkshire pays below the current market rate and that to offer the current spot salary would be seriously uncompetitive. No doubt the recruitment consultants once selected will be able to advise further but it would seem sensible to give ourselves some flexibility on this point by offering a range up to a ceiling level which I suggest should be £100,000 with normal local government conditions, pension and County Council relocation expenses. This level would be comparable to other counties according to LGMB survey work, although somewhat behind recently advertised rates.

4.0 Timetable

4.1 The whole purpose of seeking a substantive successor to Rosemary Archer – rather than putting in place an acting arrangement – is because there are major service challenges to tackle as we seek to move from 2* to 3* and take forward the implementation of the Children's Bill. It therefore makes sense to recruit a successor as soon as possible, although it is highly unlikely that this will be achievable by the time the post becomes vacant. However, a timetable with advertising in early May, a closing date at the end of the month with interviews in early June should allow an appointment to be made before Rosemary Archer leaves, with a view to a start date around the beginning of September – unless the successful candidate happens to be able to offer an earlier start. Subject to availability of Members, I would like to arrange for shortlisting on 27 or 28 May with assessment/interviews on 2, 3 or 4 June.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 Costs may arise in 3 ways. First, recruitment consultancy fees are likely to be in the region of £20,000 with assessment and advertising on top. It would be prudent to consider a budget of around up to £50,000 in total. These will be a call on the social services budget. Second, will be the costs of acting arrangements during any 'inter-regnum'. These will be offset by the non-payment of the Director's salary during the same period. Third, might be the additional costs arising from any higher salary.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 The County Council should move quickly to appoint a new Corporate Director of Social Services on a fixed term contract at a salary of up to £100,000 using recruitment consultants.

5.2 Members are invited to comment on the proposed process and timetable, job description and candidate specification.

Jeremy Walker
20 April 2004