

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CHIEF OFFICERS APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 12 August, 2004.

County Councillors J M Duggan, Murray Naylor, Michael Pitts (as substitute for County Councillor Bill Hoult), Caroline Seymour, Peter Sowray, Richard Thomas (as substitute for County Council Shelagh Marshall) and John Weighell.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April, 2004, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That, pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 3 on the agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

6. CHIEF OFFICERS TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

CONSIDERED –

A report of the Head of Personnel Services addressing the impact of the appointment of the new Corporate Director, Social Services on the terms and conditions of existing Chief Officers. Steve Antcliff said that no pay settlement had yet been announced, for the current year, for Chief Executives and Chief Officers and salary information in the report was, therefore, based on 03/04 rates. The 1998 national pay agreement had included a provision for a review of Chief Officer's pay and conditions, but no changes had been made, since then, other than the decisions of the Committee in respect of the new Corporate Director, Social Services. Independent reviews had, however, been undertaken by the LGMB and other organisations and these were referred to in the report. The LGMB report had recommended that performance assessment for Chief Officers should be based on their contribution to corporate strategy activity (40%); their performance in the functional area of responsibility (40%); and management competencies and behaviour (20%). The inclusion of corporate management responsibilities had already been reflected in the title and job description for the new Corporate Director, Social Services and other Directors were currently amending their job descriptions along similar lines. In respect of the earnings ceiling, to which pension contributions through the Local Government Pension Scheme are limited, he stressed that this would apply only to those who had joined the scheme after June 1989.

County Councillor John Duggan said he believed that the proposals needed to be considered in the light of the pay settlement for employees and consideration needed to be given to the message that any decision would send to other employees. He asked how performance against corporate responsibilities would be assessed, in future. He expressed particular concern if the proposed increases were to be implemented at the top of the proposed scales.

County Councillor John Weighell acknowledged that Directors already had corporate responsibility for matters within their functional area of responsibility, but he stressed that they also had wider corporate responsibilities for matters which did not relate to their service area. He also drew attention to the review, two years ago, of Business Unit Head salaries, which had proved necessary because of recruitment and retention problems. That review had reduced differentials between the highest Business Unit Head grades and those of Directors.

County Councillor Peter Sowray acknowledged that addressing the impact of the new appointment on the terms and conditions of existing Chief Officers might 'send a message' to other staff, but he believed there was an overriding recruitment and retention issue which needed to be addressed. In response to a question from County Councillor Richard Thomas relating to the review of Business Unit Head pay, Steve Antcliff said that UNISON had been made aware of the changes, which affected some 400 to 500 staff, but which did not change Chief Officer's salaries.

County Councillor Caroline Seymour acknowledged the concerns expressed by County Councillor Duggan, but said that she believed that the Committee had, in effect, already committed itself by the decisions it had made in April, which it had regarded as necessary in order to recruit to the post of Corporate Director, Social Services. She suggested that if there were a message going out to other staff, it would be that the County Council was prepared to pay market salaries to its staff.

County Councillor Murray Naylor agreed with County Councillor Caroline Seymour that it would now be very difficult to maintain existing Chief Officers salaries at their current level as the new Corporate Director had been appointed at a higher level. He expressed the view, however, that he did not believe that, the past culture of the County Council had been sufficiently corporate and he believed that the need to review salaries also provided a good opportunity to achieve greater corporacy of approach at the most senior officer level.

County Councillor Michael Pitts said that he had been involved in the discussions about the appointment of the Corporate Director, Social Services and agreed that the issue of the terms and conditions of existing Chief Officers had, in practical terms, largely been determined when decisions about that appointment were made. Whilst understanding County Councillor Duggan's unease, he believed that a change to pay scales was inevitable.

County Councillor Murray Naylor commented that elected Members had responsibilities both to reward staff appropriately and to protect the interests of Council Tax payers, but he believed that the implementation of LGMB recommended pay scales was probably the most appropriate way to reconcile those responsibilities.

RESOLVED –

1. That the LGMB recommended pay scales and the associated performance assessment and progression arrangements, set out in the report, be implemented for all Chief Officers, subject to individual agreement on the new corporate job descriptions and the assessment/progression process.
2. That existing Chief Officers be placed on Point 1 of the relevant scale with effect from 1 April, 2004 and be moved to Point 2 of the scale with effect from 1 October, 2004 and that progression to further points from 1 April, 2005 and thereafter be dependent on assessments of performance in the post.
3. That the process for the annual appraisal of performance of Directors should formally involve the Executive Members who have responsibility for the relevant area of service.
4. That no decision be taken on appropriate contribution rates for a shared cost AVC pension arrangement at this time.