

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the JOINT APPOINTMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE held on 15 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: Councillor M R Smith - Chairman

Councillors: Mrs I A Darby
B Harding
P M Jones
P Kelly
Mrs P Plant
R Reed
D Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillor R Burns-Green.

37 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Appointments & Implementation Committee held on 19 December 2013 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

40 CONCLUSION OF THE HOUSING SHARED SERVICE STAFF CONSULTATION

Members of the Joint Appointments and Implementations Committee received a report outlining the outcomes of the Housing Shared Service Staff Consultation. The Housing Shared Service Review aimed to deliver improved resilience, improved quality of service and also aimed to reduce costs by £120,000 per annum by 2015. Councillors noted that staff had fully engaged in the consultation process, as was reflected in the wide range of questions that were posed and answered.

Staff suggested some alternative arrangements during the consultation process. It was decided that there should be only one manager of the Housing Shared Service to ensure that roles and responsibilities were clearly defined. Officers at South Bucks District Council had raised concerns that the South Bucks Procedure for Staffing Reductions and Redundancies was not being followed. The procedure allowed for staff to be 'matched' into new posts if the duties of the post were similar to their current post. It was stated that this was not possible as the review affects staff from two different Councils, as well as some staff TUPE transferred from Paradigm Housing to Chiltern District Council. Staff have been asked to make an expression of interest in posts in the Shared Service by 19 January.

The job descriptions for the Joint Housing Team contain salary levels, and one Councillor asked for clarification that these salaries did not preclude the outcome of the harmonisation of Terms and Conditions between the Councils. The salaries listed were based on the current Terms and Conditions for each Council. It was noted that staff appointed to the new structure would automatically be transferred to the new Terms and Conditions once these were in place.

The Joint Housing Team would have 14 posts, which was noted to be a reduction of 5 from the current posts across both Councils. It was questioned whether it would be possible to carry out the same level of service with a reduced number of posts. Members were advised that the reduction in posts related to current vacancies across the Councils. If all current post holders are appointed to posts under the new structure then only one post was at risk of redundancy.

It was noted that if a member of staff did not express an interest in any posts in the new structure they were likely to negate any redundancy package. All members of staff in the teams were encouraged to express an interest, and if they did not they would have put themselves in a position where they would have no job.

Councillors questioned why priority would be given to permanent employees whose posts were at risk from other parts of the Councils rather than to temporary staff from the Housing Teams. It was stated that this would reduce potential costs of redundancy, and that those members of staff with similar competencies/transferable skills from other parts of the Council would be trained for a job in the Housing Team should they successfully apply for a post.

In response to a question about whether the supporting departments in the Council would be ready for the Shared Service, Councillors were advised that the infrastructure was on track in accordance with the Housing Shared Service Business Plan, and there was nothing to indicate that this would not be ready on time. Meetings were taking place regarding detailed planning of office layouts.

Councillors stated that the review had been carried out professionally, and thanked staff for working hard on the review.

RESOLVED -

That, subject to the decision of the Personnel Committee at Chiltern District Council, the proposed final structure for the Housing Service as set out in Appendices A and B in the report be agreed.

41 CONCLUSION OF THE BUILDING CONTROL SHARED SERVICES STAFF CONSULTATION

Members received a report outlining the outcomes of the Building Control Shared Services Staff Consultation. It was noted that staff had engaged well with this process, which was reflected in the number of FAQs that had been received.

The report outlined the deletion of the Trainee/Assistant Building Control Surveyor from the proposed structure. It was noted that the existing trainee had left the Council, and therefore this post was currently vacant. The business case had stated that there would be a reduction of a single post. The deletion of this post had been achieved without redundancy costs. It was stated that if a more senior post became vacant at a later stage, that post may be replaced with a trainee post to lead to further savings.

Councillors asked why the post of Assistant Building Control Manager was required. They were advised that an important element of the role was to explore new income generating opportunities and to ensure that customers were receiving the service that was needed in order to protect existing income streams which were very substantial. Once the team had been combined it would be a reasonably sized team, and the Building Control Manager post would require some support, particularly in the early set up period. The post would also be responsible for some surveying work, and there would be some capacity to deal with a moderate increase in workload.

One Member asked what the difference was between a Senior Building Control Surveyor and a Building Control Surveyor. It was advised that differentiating between the two roles allowed for a career grading approach. Both levels of post would require experience and qualifications, but there would be a higher personal specification and more experience required for a Senior Building Control Surveyor post.

RESOLVED -

That, subject to the decision of the Personnel Committee at Chiltern District Council, the proposed final structure for the Building Control Service as set out in Appendices A and B in the report be agreed.

The meeting ended at 6.38 pm