

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Transformation Committee held on
Monday, 20 March 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor SGM Kindersley – Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard JD Batchelor
NN Cathcart RT Summerfield

Officers: John Ballantyne Chief Executive
Susan Gardner Craig Human Resources Manager

Councillors RF Bryant, SM Edwards, R Hall, Mrs EM Heazell, MJ Mason, Mrs CAED Murfitt, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink MBE were in attendance, by invitation.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that discussion is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor MJ Mason declared a personal interest by reason of a complaint against him registered by the Standards Board for England, no. 14128/06.

4. ADVERTISEMENT FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST

The re-drafted advertisement was considered and it was confirmed that the same wording would be used for internal and external advertisement. Concerns were expressed that some wording might be seen as imposing a direction on the new Chief Executive and that there was duplication. After discussion, the Committee, noting that publication was due later in the week,

APPROVED the advertisement for the new Chief Executive for final drafting, subject to the deletion of the last two sentences in the second paragraph and other typographical changes; the final draft to be circulated to the Committee for typographical checking before publication.

5. ASSIMILATION EXERCISE

The Human Resources Manager reported on the results of the assimilation exercise, where pertinent features of the new roles were compared against the existing job descriptions of staff eligible to be considered. Where only one candidate matched 80% of the job description of a new role they would be automatically assimilated as of right; where there were two or more candidates with the right match, a competitive process would have to be undertaken.

Members expressed some concern that the result was the second of the two senior Management Team posts being filled first, whereas the intention had been to allow the new Chief Executive an input into recruitment to this post, and

AGREED that part of the fee to the consultants to the project should be withheld on the grounds that certain advice relied upon had proved incorrect.

Given the next item on the agenda, the Committee on a majority vote,

RESOLVED that the Housing and Environmental Services Director be assimilated to the post of Executive Director.

6. LETTER FROM THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES DIRECTOR

The Committee considered the request of the Finance and Resources Director that his application for voluntary redundancy be reconsidered. The application still stood despite the results of the assimilation exercise.

The Committee was advised that, if the application were accepted, thought must be given to the location of Section 151 financial responsibilities as these must be held by a financially qualified person. It was quite common in other authorities for these responsibilities to be held at second tier level. The Committee had no wish to add section 151 duties to the role of Chief Executive, noting the principle that the senior management team should be strategic.

Deep concerns were expressed about the effects of this loss and the Committee, with extreme reluctance, and with one abstention,

RESOLVED that the application from the Finance and Resources Director for voluntary redundancy be now accepted, negotiations to proceed on timing.

7. OTHER MATTERS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Compromise Agreements

The principle of restrictive covenants was discussed and differences of opinion voiced. It was, however, believed that management team had some form of restriction already included in their contracts of employment. It was agreed that this should be checked and Members advised.

Audit Trail

External Audit had been given assurance about the audit trail of decisions.

Allowance for career counselling

Other than already agreed for the Chief Executive, no reason was seen to depart from the figures contained in the redundancy policy.

Costings

A number of calls were made for updated costs and predicted savings to be made available in view of the number of enquiries received by Members. The Leader believed that the latest information was contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy reported to Cabinet on 9 February, but was happy that this should be emailed to Members again. He was aware of the promise to report costings to Cabinet every three months and reiterated that it was essential that the Transformation Project deliver savings, otherwise other budgets would have to be cut further.

Notices of wish to dismiss

It was noted that notices of the wish to dismiss had been served on Cabinet members in respect of the two management team posts already made redundant, as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, and that no objections had been received in the time allowed.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed; timing subject to any need for an urgent meeting to resolve the issue of restrictive covenants.

The Meeting ended at 3.35 p.m.
