

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

11 October 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Clayden (Chair), Bennett, Dixon, Rhodes [Substituting for Dendle] and Stanley.

348. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An Apology for Absence had been received from Councillor Dendle.

349. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

350. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were approved by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

351. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted for this meeting.

352. START TIMES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings for the remainder of 2021/22 be 6.00 pm

353. REMUNERATION FOR THE VACANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST

The Chair invited the Interim Group Head of Corporate Support & Section 151 Officer to present this item. The Committee therefore received a report summarising the information that it needed to consider in making recommendations on the remuneration to be paid for the permanent Chief Executive Officer post. The Committee was also being asked to make recommendations on the remuneration of the Interim Chief Executive post based on recommendations made to this meeting from the meeting of the Chief Executive's Recruitment & Selection Panel held on 29 September 2021.

The Recruitment & Selection Panel had suggested a remuneration package made up of the following for the permanent recruitment of a Chief Executive:

- A salary of up to £125k per annum in line with current Chief Executive pay;
- That this should be an all-inclusive salary with no additional allowances such as car allowance etc
- That expenses could be claimed in line with Council Policy; and
- A one-off relocation allowance of up to £8,000

The Committee was also being asked to consider the Recruitment & Selection Panel's recommendation to the Special Council Meeting on 13 October 2021 that an interim Chief Executive be employed on £1,543 per day for a period of six months to include agency costs.

The Chair then invited debate on the proposals presented. Discussion commenced debating the salary for the interim Chief Executive where concerns were raised over the substantial daily rate proposed and questions were asked as to the hours that the interim CEO would work over a period of one week or calendar month. Comments were also made with questions being asked over the one-off relocation allowance of £8k proposed for the recruitment of a permanent CEO. The point was also made as to whether the Council needed to have a Chief Executive. In view of the high salary to be paid and at a time when the Council was needing to be sensitive in looking at its costs, was this a cost that could be avoided and were there other options around the appointment of the CEO role that the Council could consider?

The Group Head of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer confirmed that the remit of this Committee was to consider what would be paid to the CEO considering the Recruitment & Selection Panel's recommendations. She explained that some of the questions being asked around the hours that the Interim CEO would work, would be provided at the Special Meeting of the Council on 13 October 2021 under Exempt Business. Responding to the comments made on the relocation allowance, this was discretionary and for the Council to consider based on applications received. The Law under the Local Government Act 1972 confirmed that the Council had to have a Head of Paid Service, not necessarily a Chief Executive, but without one, the decisions made by the Council would be ultra-virus.

Officers were asked if they could provide salary comparisons for those authorities that had a Head of Paid Service and not a Chief Executive. The Committee felt that this would be a worthwhile exercise to undertake and to provide to Members prior to the Special Meeting of the Council on 13 October 2021.

Debate continued in terms of what the role of Chief Executive meant compared to that of a Head of Paid Service. Councillor Bennett then suggested that a Members' Seminar be organised to explore what the Council could or could not do in terms of such an appointment so that all options could be explored and all options in terms of salary in the current financial climate could be examined to ensure value for money for the District's residents.

Returning to debate on the salary for the Interim CEO, there were Councillors stating that they felt that uneasy in feeling that were able to endorse the day rate proposed. Not just in terms of the high day rate, but in view of the entire package and in terms of the number of days per week that would be worked. This level of detail was required now to allow the Committee to be able to make a recommendation to Council.

Turning to the permanent position there were concerns expressed on this as well. The salary of the existing Chief Executive had been set based on a staff headcount of over 750 staff. Ten years on and the Council was now much smaller with a staff headcount of over 300 staff. Based on this fact, did the salary need to be adjusted? An alternative salary of £120k was suggested which although would move Arun into a lower salary band, would make it commensurate with Arun now being a smaller Council. It was also felt that the notice period given by the Chief Executive needed to be revisited and extended to six months, though it was accepted this might not be the remit of this Committee. Another point made was that for the permanent role, any salary reviews for the Chief Executive needed to revert to the national pay award set for staff and not considered by the Remuneration Committee.

The Committee also asked if the role of the Interim CEO could be undertaken on a part-time basis. Without these answers the Committee felt that it could not come to any firm decision on a rate for the Interim CEO.

Reassurance was provided to the Committee from the Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer confirming that the CEO Recruitment & Selection Panel had considered all scenarios prior to proceeding with interviewing for an Interim CEO. She referred to the Minutes from both meetings of the Selection Panel held in September 2021 which had been provided in the report as background papers using e-links.

The Committee continued to confirm that it could not support or make recommendations on items where not all the vital information had been supplied. All options needed to be explored to include the role of a CEO and the role of Head of Paid Service. The salary for a permanent CEO was very high with the public agreeing that a much smaller salary would be more appropriate.

Councillor Bennett then repeated his suggestion made earlier formally proposing “that a Members’ Seminar be organised to explore what the Council could or could not do in terms of the appointment for a permanent CEO or Head of Paid Service allowing all options to be explored and all options in terms of salary in the current financial climate to be examined to ensure and achieve value for money for the District’s residents. It was confirmed that this Seminar needed to be organised for as soon as possible.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Stanley.

On the proposal being put to the vote it was declared CARRIED.

The Committee then returned to debating the proposals for the Interim CEO and the daily consultancy fee. There was unease expressed over endorsing this by way of a recommendation to Special Council and a proposal was made to note the agency cost and day rate of £1,543 and for the debate to occur at the Special Council meeting. This was then formally proposed by Councillor Dixon and then seconded by Councillor Stanley.

This proposal was then debated by the Committee.

Debate again returned to the proposed day rate for the interim CEO at £1,543 and questions were asked as to why the Council’s Directors could not be given delegated authority to undertake the role on a shared basis whilst the recruitment for a permanent CEO was undertaken. Other Members of the Committee confirmed that they were happy for an external interim to be employed but not at the rate set.

Following further debate, it was confirmed that such a decision could not be made without the required consultation taking place with the Officer’s concerned.

On putting Councillor Dixon’s proposal to the vote, it was declared CARRIED.

Finally, another point made was that for the permanent role, the salary reviews for the Chief Executive needed to revert back to the national pay award set for staff and not considered by the Remuneration Committee. This was formally proposed by Councillor Dixon and seconded by Councillor Stanley. On this being put to the vote it was declared CARRIED.

The Committee therefore

RECOMMEND TO THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL – That

- (a) A Members' Seminar be organised to explore what the Council could or could not do in terms of the appointment for a permanent Chief Executive Officer or Head of Paid Service allowing all options to be explored and all options in terms of salary in the current financial climate to be examined to ensure and achieve value for money for the District's residents. It was confirmed that this Seminar be organised for as soon as possible;
- (b) In looking at the remuneration for a permanent Chief Executive, that salary reviews move to the national pay award in the future as agreed by the "Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives of Local Authorities; and
- (c) In appointing an Interim Chief Executive Officer, the day rate proposed by the Chief Executive Recruitment & Selection Panel equating to £1,543 per day be noted and left for Full Council to debate.

(The meeting concluded at 6.56 pm)