

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 2 July 2009.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs J G Lawrence (Chairman)
Cllr K Sharer (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs R A Baker
P A Blaine

Cllrs P Rawcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs R Stay
Mrs P E Turner MBE

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE
K C Matthews

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
D Bowater

Officers in Attendance: —

GPC/09/2 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tricia Turner (Councillor Ken Matthews was present as her substitute) and Richard Stay (Councillor Fiona Chapman was present as his substitute).

GPC/09/3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

GPC/09/4 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

There were no announcements or matters of communications from the Chairman.

GPC/09/5 **Petitions**

No petitions had been received.

GPC/09/6 **Public Questions, Statements or Deputations**

There were no public questions, statements or deputations.

GPC/09/7 Disclosure of Exempt Information

There were no matters containing exempt information for the Committee to consider.

GPC/09/8 Review of Electoral Arrangements - Central Bedfordshire

The Committee received a report of the Electoral/Members' Services Manager proposing the establishment of a Member Working Group to consider and make recommendations to this Committee on the review of electoral arrangements about to be conducted by the Boundary Committee for England.

The Chairman advised that it was acceptable for members of the Working Group to be drawn from beyond the membership of the Committee, in view of the desirability of representation from different parts of the Council's area.

A discussion ensued regarding timescales. It was noted that there may be a need for a meeting of this Committee in advance of October 1 2009, the date of the next scheduled meeting. It would be used to consider the recommendations of the Working Group and make a recommendation to Council in line with the deadline for making a submission to the Boundary Committee.

A discussion ensued on the inclusion of substitutes on the Working Group. It was noted that in view of the in-depth work being carried out by the Working Group it would be difficult for a substitute to play a full part at an individual meeting without being aware of work which had already been addressed. In view of this, a suggestion was made that a substitute for each political group be nominated and that they be asked to attend all the meetings, but only play a full part if they were acting as substitute for an absent member.

RESOLVED:-

1. to establish a Working Group to work with officers to develop proposals and carry out consultation with stakeholders concerning proposals for a submission to the Boundary Commission for England relating to revised electoral arrangements;
2. that membership of the Working Group be limited to 4 members and 2 substitute members;
3. that the Working Group consist of 3 members of the Conservative Group and 1 member of the Liberal Democrat Group to reflect the overall political composition of the Council, plus 1 substitute member from each political Group;
4. that the members of the Working Group be Councillors Rawcliffe, Male and David Lawrence from the Conservative Group and Councillor Blaine from the Liberal Democrat Group;
5. that the Committee delegates to the Chairman the appointment of one substitute each from the Conservative Group and the Liberal Democrat Group following receipt of nominations.

GPC/09/9 **Update on HR Policies for Staff Employed on Central Bedfordshire Terms and Conditions of Employment**

The Committee received a report of the Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development advising of the progress made to date in agreeing Human Resources policies for Central Bedfordshire Council non-school based employees with the relevant trade unions. Members had also been provided with draft copies of the policies.

In response to a question it was noted that once the policies were agreed, a period of one month's notice would be provided to employees that the policies would apply to their terms and conditions of employment.

It was noted that training would be provided for managers during September, in order to achieve consistency in applying the policies.

RESOLVED:-

1. to endorse the HR policies for non-schools employees already agreed with the Trade Unions;
2. to endorse the proposals to apply these policies to all Central Bedfordshire Council employees (non schools);
3. to endorse the proposed plan to draft and agree remaining HR policies for Central Bedfordshire Council non-schools employees.

GPC/09/10 **Update on Conditions of Service for Central Bedfordshire Non Schools Staff**

The Committee received a report of the Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources and Operational Development. The report advised the Committee of agreed terms and conditions of employment for non-schools staff employed on new Central Bedfordshire Council NJC contracts of employment as set out in the NJC Conditions of Service document attached as an appendix to the report.

A comment was made that the second paragraph in section 1.2 on page 4 of the appendix was unclear. The Committee was advised that this paragraph contained an error which had been amended since the dispatch of the committee papers.

A discussion ensued regarding the arrangements relating to the paying of increments. A comment was made by a member of the Committee that the principle of paying increments could be reviewed and this matter may be considered by the Committee in the future.

RESOLVED:-

1. to endorse the terms and conditions of employment for non-schools employees as set out in the Conditions of Service document attached to the report as an appendix;
2. to endorse the proposals to make further additions/amendments to the Conditions of Services document as information becomes available.

GPC/09/11 **Harmonisation Project**

The Committee received an oral report from the Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development, on the harmonisation project. Members were advised that there was concern among staff about disparity in pay among some people carrying out the same job who had TUPE transferred from different legacy authorities. There is also a duty to address inequalities in terms and conditions and the harmonisation project is a medium to long term project. In the meantime, clarity had been reached on a number of principles, including the position for staff when a post becomes vacant. If recruitment to a post was carried out with a salary higher than that of employees carrying out the same job, they would have the opportunity to voluntarily transfer to Central Bedfordshire Council's terms and conditions with the accompanying salary.

It was recognised that achieving harmonisation would be a major undertaking and there would no doubt be resistance to some of the proposed changes. Job analysts were currently being recruited to assist with this project.

RESOLVED to note the oral report.

GPC/09/12 **Proposed Chief Executive Salary Range**

The Committee noted that a replacement paper to the one attached to the agenda had been published and circulated.

Members considered a report of the Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development seeking endorsement to a proposed salary scale for the post of Chief Executive.

Members expressed concern that the scale should not be excessively high in the current economic climate. They also considered that the starting salary for the Chief Executive should be such as to enable progression in accordance with the agreed salary range. It was noted that the terms of the recruitment were that candidates could expect a salary "circa £185,000" and that therefore the starting salary offered to the successful candidate should not be too far from this level.

Members noted that the Chief Executive would have an annual appraisal and satisfactory performance would be rewarded by an increase in salary up to the next point on the range.

A proposal was made that the salary scale should be from point 2 to point 5 of the scale recommended in the report, that is point 2 £174,000 to point 5 £191,000.

An amendment to the proposal was made that the range should be from point 1 to point 5 of the scale set out in the report, that is starting at £169,000.

On a show of hands the amendment was lost by 3 votes in favour and 3 votes plus the Chairman's casting vote against.

The proposal for the scale to start from point 2 (£174,000) and progress to point 5 (£191,000) was agreed on a show of hands by 4 votes in favour and none against.

RESOLVED:-

1. (by 4 votes in favour and none against) to set the salary scale for the post of Chief Executive as follows:-

SCP	Salary	Difference between SCP's	% difference
1.	£174,000		
2.	£179,000	£5000	2.8%
3.	£185,000	£6000	3.2%
4.	£191,000	£6000	3.1%

2. to re-confirm the commitment not to offer the successful candidate a starting salary above £185,000 unless there are very exceptional circumstances;
3. that progression through the salary scale will be by appraisal of performance.

GPC/09/13 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 1 October 2009 but that dependent on the timescale for the Committee to consider the recommendations of the Review of Electoral Arrangements Working Group, the date may be brought forward or a special meeting may be arranged.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.15 a.m..)