

## CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Affairs Committee was held on 11 November 2009.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Clark (Chair), Councillors Brunton, Elder, McPartland, Mrs H Pearson, OBE, and Purvis.

**OFFICERS:** C Davies, S Harker, R Long and R Painter.

**\*\*ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor N J Walker.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillor McIntyre.

### **\*\* DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

### **\*\*MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2009 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

With regard to the item on Annual Member Reports and in response to a query raised, clarification was given that whilst it was suggested that Ward Councillors could collaborate on the production of a single Newsletter per Ward, there was no obligation to do so.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES – APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

A report of the Head of Commissioning and Resources was presented to explain the rationale behind the introduction of a meeting with prospective governors to clarify the role of governorship.

The new OFSTED Inspection Schedule placed a greater emphasis on the effectiveness of Governing Bodies in challenging and supporting schools so that weaknesses were tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities were met.

The role and responsibilities of governorship had increased and in order to meet these demands prospective governors were invited to meet with the Governor Recruitment, Retention and Information Officer to explain governors' roles in terms of strategy, monitoring and accountability. Information was also provided on the various categories of governorship, the appointment process and an explanation of the expected commitment in terms of time and training. Prospective governors were provided with a copy of the latest OFSTED Inspection Report for the school or schools in which they had expressed an interest.

During the informal meeting a number of questions were posed in order to glean as much information as possible about the skills and qualities the applicants possessed which could then be appropriately married up with a Governing Body with a vacancy. A recommendation was made to the prospective governor to visit the school they were interested in serving in order to find out further information about that school. Nominations for Local Authority Governor vacancies were then brought to the Corporate Affairs Committee for consideration. Nominations for Community Governor vacancies would be forwarded to the appropriate Governing Body for consideration.

The process had been in effect since January 2009 and it was estimated that approximately 30 prospective governors and Head Teachers had been involved in the process to date. The process enabled prospective governors to be fully conversant with their roles and responsibilities and allowed the Governor Development Service to recommend prospective candidates. The overall impact of the introduction of this process had led to the appropriate placement of

governors, commitment from them in attending training, and an awareness and commitment to their role.

**ORDERED** that the information in relation to the appointment of Local Authority Governors be received and noted.

## **APPOINTMENTS TO THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' REMUNERATION**

A report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services was presented to seek the Committee's confirmation of appointments to the Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration.

The Council was required to have an Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration with the constitution and appointments decided by the Council. The Middlesbrough Panel currently comprised six members each of whom served a term of three years. Members could serve more than one term of office. Details of the current membership were contained in the submitted report.

Three members' terms of office had expired and all had expressed an interest to serve a further term of office. The current Chair had also indicated that he was willing to serve an additional term as Chair of the Panel. The current Panel understood the legislation and had conducted themselves properly and fairly.

**ORDERED** as follows that:

1. Dr Jim Whiston, John Hargan and June Goodchild's re-appointments to the Panel be approved.
2. Dr Jim Whiston be invited to continue to serve as Chair of the Panel.

## **EARLY RETIREMENT/VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY**

The Directors of Human Resources, Legal and Democratic Services, and Resources, submitted a report seeking agreement to a temporary variation to the voluntary redundancy provisions in order to assist in the identification of savings and avoid or minimise any compulsory redundancies.

As part of the Council identifying savings to meet the funding gap, reviews of both staff and non-staff budgets were in progress. Voluntary redundancies could assist in this process by offering opportunities for restructures and redeployments. The Council's Consultation, Redundancy Selection and Appeals Policy and the Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy Policy were attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. These policies provided for redundancy payments of up to 30 weeks pay to be made at actual pay rather than at the statutory level.

It was proposed that an enhanced voluntary redundancy scheme should be established to run up until 31 March 2010. This would temporarily enhance redundancy payments for volunteers on the following basis:

- Applications would be considered on the basis that approval would depend upon whether:
  - (a) they would facilitate a saving including, but not restricted to, the release of the applicant's post or another's post, and
  - (b) the cost of granting the application could be recovered through savings over no more than 3 years.
- Successful applications would receive the normal redundancy payment multiplied by 1.75 (a maximum, depending on age and service of 52.5 weeks pay).
- The scheme would allow staff to express an interest at any point although the responses to some applications might have to be deferred until redeployment or savings proposals could be worked through.

- No change was proposed to the approach to added years in the case of staff over 50 years (or over 55 years with effect from 1 April 2010). Therefore added years would be considered in addition only in exceptional circumstances and where costs could be balanced by savings to be made.
- Publication of a temporary amendment to the scheme would include a 'ready reckoner' so that staff could calculate possible payments for themselves.

**ORDERED** that the temporary enhancement of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme be approved.