

## **SPECIAL EXECUTIVE 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**

### COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM UNISON REGARDING THE REPORT

RESPONSES TO UNISON'S QUESTIONS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ARE SHOWN IN **BOLD ITALICS**.

- At point 2.6 (p14) of the background, it's stated that "it is felt" that it is appropriate to extend the scope of this role to include the position of deputy CEO. Felt by whom and on what basis?

***This has emerged through discussions involving South East Employers (SEE), Executive Members and myself. The basis of the decision is around keeping options open in terms of future senior management arrangements. These are being discussed over coming months as outlined in the paper.***

- A "widely held view" (3.2) is that it will be difficult to attract a suitable candidate on the current remuneration. Are we taking decisions based on "widely held views"? Who was asked?

***This view has been formed by seeking expert advice from SEE on this matter, the expert advice reflected the views of the Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources (HR).***

- There are several "widely-held" views that came out of the recent Let's Chat workshops, which apparently are a mechanism for change within the council. Several seem to have been selectively overlooked – not least pay which according to the notes circulated was "mentioned in some form by all groups" - stress, lack of job security, resources and progression opportunities which were also widely mentioned. Will these "widely held views" be given equal primacy? If not, why not?

***The views expressed by staff at the 'Let's Chat' workshops last autumn can be discussed at the regular Trade Union/Chief Executive meetings. This is not directly relevant to the report before the Special Executive.***

- Currently, my understanding is that a de-facto deputy for the CEO has been in place, even where that position has not been formally "designated". Has that person been briefed about this change, and had it explained that not only is their role being transferred to the new post holder, but that it will be the subject of remuneration where it has not been previously?

***Consultation has taken place. It should be made clear that the remuneration for the post is largely driven by the statutory roles of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and the current market for such roles.***

- Does the role being designated "Deputy CEO" therefore imply an advantage in terms of succession as and when the current CEO leaves? Has this been explained to potential internal candidates who will now be automatically disadvantaged by an outside appointee who doesn't even work here yet?

***The designation of Deputy Chief Executive does not infer that the post holder will have any advantage in the future when a vacancy for Chief Executive is advertised.***

- I note that “the additional funding required is met from the Council’s revenue reserves” – this seems extraordinary and is surely unsustainable. I have sat in meetings where multiple staff on much lower pay have had their (much more limited) terms and conditions adjusted to meet savings of utterly paltry amounts. Staff are routinely told that training budgets are squeezed and development opportunities therefore limited. Some services are running with minimal staffing, and services like Planning, BC and many others are unable to attract staff as well. We seem to have been able to conjure an additional £23k at the drop of a hat for additional duties that weren’t even formally recognised or worthy of being remunerated previously. How would the organisation like to explain this to staff whose front-line roles have been made redundant or to those services who are unable to recruit? It seems that this is an exercise in “fudging” to pre-empt the SEE review – this is not a robust or defensible solution in the face of pressures across the organisation where the option to “dip into reserves” doesn’t seem to have been entertained for lowly employees who are struggling to pay rent – let alone mortgages - or support families. Why is it one rule for corporate directors but another for everyone else?

***The remuneration package is driven by expert advice on the going rate for joint DCS / DASS roles. It is not ‘one rule for Corporate Directors (CD)’ because other remuneration and retention packages have been reviewed and enhanced by the Executive where recruitment and retention has been a problem.***

- Have we looked at recruiting/developing from within? Secondments until the pay review by SEE is complete? There is no mention of either of these in the proposal.

***Interim arrangements are in place using existing staff. However, Heads of Service and CD posts would always be advertised externally under the Council’s constitution. This does not exclude internal candidates from applying.***

- Is the message we’re sending that if a job is worth more than you’re currently being paid, the only way to address that is for a post holder to resign and for their replacement to be hired at a market rate? How is this an incentive for retention or recognition of the work of existing employees? Wouldn’t it be nice for staff to be given pay supplements to reflect the market rate whilst they are in the role? They might not resign at all then.

***When a senior post becomes vacant it is sound management to look at the responsibilities of the post and the level of remuneration, which has happened in this case. The Council’s turnover rate (13.5%) is not high enough to justify re-introducing ‘market supplements’ (HR keep this under review).***

The organisation congratulates itself on its “cost effective management model” (p13) and then simultaneously acknowledges it as a problem that needs this kind of proposal to address. Unfortunately Dave is now on leave until after this has been decided but I feel reasonably confident these considerations would be those of our branch and membership as a whole. Again it would have been nice to have been able to discuss this among our executive, but I will pick this up separately with them. I have been regularly supporting staff in tears because of the rug being pulled out from under them by the fiscal reality this council is having to work within – with respect, this proposal seems to have been conjured from a completely different reality.