

## **Appointment Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2010**

### **Present :**

Councillor T.H.Jones (Chairman);  
Councillors Fflur M. Hughes, Eric Jones, Raymond Jones, R.Ll. Jones, T.H. Jones,  
Bryan Owen, G.W. Roberts OBE.

### **In attendance :**

Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services),  
Head of Service (Corporate Services),  
Committee Officer (MEH).

### **Apology :**

Councillors P.M. Fowlie, H.E.Jones, Rhian Medi.

### **Also present :**

Councillor R.Ll. Hughes (Portfolio Holder - Social Services)

## **1. Declaration of Interest**

Mr. T. Gwyn Jones, Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) declared an interest in Item 5 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

## **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June were submitted and confirmed as correct.

## **3. Head of Housing Services Post**

The Acting Corporate Director of Housing and Social Services reported that this Committee at its meeting held on 1 June, 2010 resolved to re-advertise the post as none of the applicants met the essential criteria listed in the job description and specification. The Committee had discussed the possible reasons for the disappointing response to the advertisement and it was noted that the salary level

offered is not competitive in a North Wales or National context. The salary level is set at 70% of the Chief Officers Scale and ranges from £47,880 to £52,680); the post is awaiting evaluation.

The Housing and Social Services Department has contacted all the North Wales authorities to establish the salary levels for the Head of Housing post and it has shown that the salary level offered for similar posts is higher than the Isle of Anglesey County Council whilst the responsibilities of the posts are the same.

The Officer noted that a salary payment of 80% of the Chief Officer's Scale is available within the County Council's pay scale which equates to an annual salary of between £54,732 - £60,204; this increase can be met from the department current budget. It was reported that the Pay and Grading Panel held earlier had approved a temporary uplift of the salary of the post to 80% of the Chief Officers Scale pending the outcome of the Hay evaluation process. He further stated that the language requirement should remain as Welsh essential.

Councillor R.LI. Jones questioned if comparison had been made with similar posts within Housing Associations. He expressed that target should be set for such a post which carries a high salary. The Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) responded that comparison with Housing Associations has not taken place as the responsibilities of similar posts are not comparable. He further noted that national and internal targets are attached to such a post. The Head of Service (Housing) has a responsibility for the authority's Council Housing Stock together with Affordable Housing. Councillor Fflur M. Hughes expressed that she considered that the comparison with Housing Associations with Local Authorities was not feasible.

Councillor G.W. Roberts OBE expressed that he did not have an issue with the salary of the post but noted that the Executive at its meeting held on 26 July, 2010 had approved a capacity building budget which will entail the creation of posts within the authority which will amount to over £1/2m. He questioned if negotiations had taken place with Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council with the possibility of sharing the services of personnel. The Acting Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) responded that both Gwynedd and Conwy Council's stock has been diverted to other organisations; however Gwynedd Council still deals with Housing Grants and Homelessness but they have responded that they would require 6 months to decide if they would be willing to share services with another local authority.

Following further deliberations it was **RESOLVED** :-

- that the post of Head of Service (Housing) be re-advertised on a temporary uplift in salary of £54,732 - £60,204 (80% of the Chief Officer's Scale) pending the outcome of the Hay evaluation process.
- that the criteria of Welsh essential shall remain attached to the post.

- that applicant 3 of the original applications be retained for consideration with any further applications received for the post.
- that a report on the budget towards the uplift in salary of the post be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

#### **4. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** to adopt the following:-

"Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the discussion on the following item as it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act."

#### **5. Senior Management Arrangements - Housing and Social Services Directorate**

Submitted for consideration - a report proposing management changes to the Housing and Social Services Directorate to strengthen it and provide continuity during a period of change.

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) reported that temporary measures were agreed following the loss of the Council's Corporate Director of Housing and Social Services in 2008 to ensure continuity of management of services within that directorate. Particular attention was needed to managerial provision for the Social Services teams in as much that the Council's Head of Service (Social Services) was asked to take on the role of Acting Corporate Director until such time as a replacement was appointed or the County Council otherwise resolved to implement an alternative arrangement. Two Senior Operational Managers were asked to assume a higher level of responsibilities, sharing the duties of Head of Service between them. These arrangements have remained in place without further consideration since August 2008.

There is concern that the continuation of these arrangements, without review, is both unfair to those Officers required to undertake additional duties and responsibilities, is unsettling for the service as a whole and might create the wrong impression to outside observers and regulators. A recent external review on the directorate's safeguarding arrangements raised concerns regarding the service's ability to sustain and develop the important strategic aspects if the current arrangements continue for any significant period.

Following discussions with relevant Officers, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder (Social Services) it was considered that due to a series of service reviews proposed and the current difficult financial climate in which the services are required to operate, it was not considered an appropriate time to move ahead with a permanent appointment to the post of Corporate Director prior to such reviews having been concluded; nor was it desirable to allow the present arrangements to continue as they do not provide the stable leadership required.

With the development of practice within the directorate and the changing service requirements and delivery arrangements, there was a strong case for replacing the existing position of Head of Service (Social Services) with two posts, designed around the current temporary roles which have replaced that position. This would reflect the recognised good practice in many other authorities across England and Wales where a single Head of Social Services role has been replaced by service Heads with more specialist responsibilities for and dedicated of Adult Services and Children's and Young Peoples' services.

The implementation of the proposed changes at Head of Service level at this time would allow those appointed to contribute to a wider review and remodelling of the service to reflect contemporary priorities. They may also be a prerequisite to closer collaborative working across North Wales.

The Head of Service (Corporate Services) advised the Committee that the proposed contractual change would involve no additional cost over and above the current temporary arrangements, but asked that the Committee note that in the event of any decision to terminate the proposed contract without renewal it was probable that the Council would have a liability in terms of any severance scheme current at that time. He was able and prepared to give a verbal indication of possible liability based on the current scheme. Some Members were however unhappy that they had not been provided with detailed budgetary information and asked that this be made available for the September meeting of the County Council.

The Portfolio Holder (Social Services) gave a background to the Senior Management arrangements within the Social Services Department and he expressed his appreciation to the Officers concern for their co-operation since August 2008. He noted that the Recovery Board has expressed their views with regard to the children's services and it is paramount that the post of Corporate Director must be filled.

Some Members of the Committee were critical that the post of Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) had not been filled for 2 years, notwithstanding the temporary arrangements.

Following further discussions it was **RESOLVED to recommend to the County Council :-**

**5.1 that the basis of the temporary appointment of the Acting Corporate Director be amended to that of Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) for a fixed term appointment of one year's duration at this time, with a review and if necessary and appropriate, an extension of contract for a further period.**

**5.2 that the existing post of Head of Service (Social Services) be deleted and replaced by two posts, each covering specific service areas within the Social Services unit, the grading for these posts having been set, pending outcomes of the Hay job evaluation review, at the preceding meeting of the Pay and Grading Panel.**

**5.3 that the appropriate grading for the proposed posts at 5.2 above be established through the relevant job evaluation process.**

**5.4 that full budgetary details of the posts involved be made available to the County Council.**

**Councillor T.H.Jones  
Chairman**