

Appointments and Remuneration Committee

Thursday, 7th December, 2017

6.15 - 6.50 pm

Attendees	
Councillors:	Rowena Hay (Chair), Wendy Flynn and Colin Hay
Also in attendance:	Julie McCarthy and Pat Pratley
Apologies:	Councillor Malcolm Stennett and Councillor Jon Walklett

Minutes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Stennett and Walklett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. EXECUTIVE BOARD RESTRUCTURE

The Chief Executive introduced the report and explained that upon her appointment as Chief Executive by Council in July 2017 she was given a mandate to review the senior leadership of CBC. The report presented a proposal for the review of the executive board. It was important that the senior leadership foundation was strong and the report contained an assessment of what she considered to be strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at the current time.

The Chief Executive went on to say that there were some extremely good things; a strong focus on place, a committed and ambitious team, service modernisation and transformation happening but only in part of the authority and strong partnerships and relations with partners continuing to be developed. However, what was missing within the combined executive board leadership was a “whole authority” view. She felt like there were currently two organisations within one, and it was her job to bring it back together, to give it coherence for the future, so that the priorities Members had set could be delivered with an executive team which was clear on accountability, purpose and delivery. She therefore saw one of her key roles as “knitting the organisation together”. She acknowledged that the staff were doing a fantastic job under extremely difficult circumstances, not least the continuing financial pressures, but believed if the issues were not addressed or opportunities seized now that the authority would be in a much weaker position in the future and would not achieve its full potential.

The report articulated not just the structure of executive board but how she expected the executive board to operate; not with single directorates in mind but

taking a whole authority view. Clarity on accountabilities was important as was a culture of collaboration; between ourselves, between partners and between staff all with the objective of achieving better outcomes for Cheltenham.

She felt that currently the less strong voice from the executive team table was about people (staff and customers), the drive to modernise how we work in the future and the culture we wanted for this authority. She highlighted that the key enablers for change were our people, our technology and our culture and these were the key areas of focus for the proposed new role.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the focus on staff was hugely important to her personally and she referred to the fact that the council was an accredited investors in people organisation. She wanted to be able to give staff the development opportunities they needed and deserved, grow our own talent as far as possible and create talent pathways, have jobs that are potentially broader but hopefully more interesting, reward in a way that was affordable and in a way that recognised the contributions made. She wanted the authority to be an “employer of choice” and be better than those around us and to attract new talent as well as an authority staff felt proud to be part of.

She felt that increasing capacity in the short term was also crucial whilst the structure of the organisation was being examined. She pointed out that, based on the business case outlined in the report, the proposal was for the Director of Corporate Resources and Projects to flexibly retire but continue in a transitional role to deliver key corporate projects for a period of 2 years. She highlighted that if the organisation was to deliver what was currently on the agenda, and also embrace and resource organisational change and modernise the authority, then the additional capacity for a set period of time was absolutely crucial.

The Chief Executive reported that she had spoken to a number of staff about the proposed structure including those directly affected and they were supportive of the vision.. She had shared the proposals with trade union colleagues and again they were very supportive of what was wished to be achieved through this review of the executive board leadership. She had also received feedback from staff that they welcomed the openness and transparency of sharing the proposals with them and, subject to this meeting, she would be holding some drop-in sessions for staff the following week.

She was aware that change was always daunting and she did not want staff to worry about the future but she was absolutely clear that change was necessary. Her commitment to the staff, and also to Members, was that there would be engagement and involvement going forward.

Finally, the Chief Executive expressed how she was personally excited about the future, the authority was already a great place to work, staff were a hugely talented and committed group of people who had a strong affinity with Cheltenham as a place, and these were strong foundations on which to build upon.

Members welcomed the proposal to remove silo working and adopt a whole authority approach particularly as there was more cross-over now the organisation was slimmer. They recognised that whilst for some people change was difficult if this didn't happen then the organisation would not be sustainable. The Chief Executive said that the aim was for each Director to have a role to

play in contributing to the MTFS and that it should be owned as a board as a whole rather than being the burden of the new role Director of Finance and Assets. The trade unions in particular had taken a positive view as to the openness on how the organisation was aiming to be financially sustainable following the forward thinking presentation given to them by the Chief Finance Officer.

The Chief Executive added that she had been working closely with senior officers from Publica on organisational development and the two organisations were on a similar pathway. Publica would also be important going forward in supporting CBC through ICT and human resources.

Members recognised that if CBC did not stay ahead of the game there was a risk that people would be lost to Publica. The Chief Executive added that at the same time staff could potentially get experience in Publica via secondment. She said that the model for CBC could be a testbed for Publica by highlighting that not many councils wished to join Publica wholesale and if the model worked for CBC this could be a good example.

A Member asked what kind of person the Chief Executive was looking for in the Executive Director People and Change as he was not sure whether the focus was currently right in terms of stronger communities and interacting with people and customers. The Chief Executive stated that the candidate should have organisational change experience and in a number of disciplines and be passionate about people receiving the best services and passionate about communities as well as understanding that change was about people.

In response to a question about timeline the Head of Human Resources said that there would now be formal consultation on the proposal which would conclude in mid January at which point a formal report would be brought back to Appointments and Remuneration Committee and would then be submitted to Council in February. In terms of when the Director People and Change would be in post this would depend very much on the notice period of the postholder but was envisaged to be around June/July time.

Members felt strongly that the advert for the Director post should be posted nationally. The Strategic HR Manager confirmed that this was a Member appointment and it was proposed that a headhunting approach be adopted via recruitment consultants. This would give the Chief Executive the advantage of stipulating the type of candidate which she was seeking. The Chief Executive added that this was a hugely important role and if anyone locally wished to put themselves forward for the role they would not be put off by the proposed recruitment process.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the report before Members had already been shared with Group Leaders and the Chair confirmed she had received positive feedback from the PAB Group Leader via email.

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the management restructure proposals as set out in Section 9 and Appendix 4 of this report be approved for the purposes of formal consultation with Executive Board**

2. it be noted that the Chief Executive intends to commence consultation on 8 December 2017
3. a further report on the management restructure proposals following completion of the formal consultation be received.

5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING (IF NECESSARY)**
Monday 29 January 2018

Rowena Hay
Chairman