

EMPLOYMENT PANEL

TUESDAY 13 JULY 2010 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT: Councillors Bloxham, Glover, Mallinson J, Mitchelson, Stothard and Weber.

EMP.19/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EMP.20/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of any of the items on the Agenda.

EMP.21/10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2010 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

EMP.22/10 PRINCIPAL OFFICER LEASE CAR SCHEME

The Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive (Governance & Resources) presented report CE.32/10 which proposed a method for phasing out the Principal Officer Lease Car Scheme in accordance with the resolution of the Employment Panel (Minute EMP.12/10).

The Strategic Director reminded the Panel that, at its meeting on 1 February 2010, Members had resolved that the Strategic Management Team should consult with staff and report back with a view to phasing out the Principal Officer Leased Car Scheme. Consultation had taken place with trades unions and staff with Principal Officer leased cars between May and August 2010. Consultation had also taken place with Allerdale Council in respect of those members of staff in their IT department who had been transferred under Carlisle City Council's terms and conditions to determine what they wished to do.

The Strategic Director advised the Panel of the proposal that had been consulted upon and the reasons for phasing out the scheme. No feedback had been received from either lease car holders or the trades unions.

The Strategic Director stated that if Members agree he would write to all lease car holders formally notifying them of the changes.

There was discussion about the costs to the Council for alternative schemes to those indicated by the report. Members were advised the termination costs for individuals had not been worked out. It was also possible that some of the current lease car holders would transfer to the Essential Car User scheme. That scheme was due to be reviewed in the near future.

In response to Members' concerns about the fairness of the proposed compensatory payments the Strategic Director advised that, while it did seem unfair, the proposal attempted to allow the leases to expire and treat people equally. Members were concerned that the Council could be challenged. The Strategic Director explained that the advice was the same as that for job evaluation protection and added years protection, and as long as a plan was in place and the Council abided by it the risk of challenge would be reduced.

The Panel considered alternative wording to the proposal that would not tie the Council to a specific end date for the compensatory payments to take into account the possibility of the final lease being terminated earlier than June 2014.

The Assistant Director (Resources) advised Members that there were 18 members of staff still within the lease car scheme with only 2 leases due to expire in 2014. The Assistant Director did not know how many were due to expire in individual years nor the individual termination costs. A Member advised that when the Overview and Scrutiny Panel had looked at the lease cars scheme the group determined that there was no indication that there would be any financial saving in terminating the leases with a six month period of notice in accordance with the lease agreements.

Members believed that more information was needed into costs of terminating the leases, the number of staff involved, the end dates of all agreements currently in place and the costs of terminating the agreements in various years.

Members requested that the Panel be adjourned until further information regarding:

- termination costs
- spreadsheets on when current leases were due to expire
- an indication of how many staff would transfer to the Essential User Car Scheme.

Members agreed to adjourn the meeting and reconvene on 9 November 2010 at 4:00pm to allow officers the opportunity to obtain further information as indicated above.

RESOLVED – That a decision be deferred until 9 November 2010, to allow officers the opportunity to obtain further information as indicated

EMP.23/10 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph Number 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

EMP.24/10 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive (Governance & Resources) presented report CE.33/10 that updated Members on structural changes to the management of the Council following the recruitment of chief officers by the Panel last year. Although only recruitment and selection of chief officers fell within the remit of the Panel it was useful for the Panel to see how their strategic decisions were delivering change within the organisation.

The Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive (Governance & Resources) reminded Members that, in all, seven chief officer appointments had been made – two strategic directors and five assistant directors. The five assistant directors had been initially focussing on management arrangements within their directorates; a necessary first step towards further reaching transformational change within the organisation.

The Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive (Governance & Resources) advised Members of the principle changes made within each of the directorates. The changes indicated in the report were set to enable further transformational change and improvement and demonstrated the capability of the new Senior Management Team in effecting change.

There was some discussion around the responsibility of the Chief Executive's delegated power to employ staff within the Council. A Member believed that as the changes would have a fundamental effect on the way services were delivered, Members should be consulted more than they had been.

The Chief Executive advised that the proposed changes had been discussed and approved by the Senior Management Team and that a lot of work had gone into the posts that would be required to enable services to be delivered.

The Chief Executive further advised that of the posts had been internally but there had been no applicants so they were then advertised externally. The Chief Executive assured staff that where posts were merged all functions of those posts would be carried out.

RESOLVED: That the contents of report CE.33/10 be noted

The meeting ended at 2:15pm to be re-convened at 4:00pm on 9 November 2010.

The Panel re-convened on Tuesday 9 November 2010 at 4:00pm to consider the additional information on the cost of compensatory payments resulting from the proposal to phase out the Principal Officers' Leased Car Scheme as provided by the Assistant Director (Resources).

The Assistant Director provided information that compared the costs of deleting the scheme on accordance with the 6 month notice provision set out in the lease scheme, compared with the phasing option recommended, along with other options for information purposes.

The Assistant Director also provided information on the year on year differences in cost.

Members gave consideration to the report asked how many members of staff who were currently on the Lease Car Scheme would transfer to the Essential Car User scheme. The Assistant Director advised that of the 21 members of staff currently who were currently on the Lease Car Scheme approximately 14 would fit the criteria for the Essential User Car Scheme.

There was discussion about the review of the Essential Car User Scheme and the Assistant Director advised that the report on the review was due to be finalised in approximately 4 months time.

RESOLVED: That the Panel approve Option 1 of the report – to provide 6 months notice to users that the scheme was to end, effective from 1 December 2010, to terminate all outstanding leases early and to transfer entitled officers to the Essential Car User Scheme or pay Casual User Allowances