

## Appointments Etc Panel

Tuesday, 2 April 2019, 2.00 pm, Bewdley Room, County Hall

		Minutes
<b>Present:</b>		Mr A I Hardman (Vice Chairman), Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Ms P A Hill, Mrs E B Tucker and Mr P Middlebrough
<b>Available papers</b>		The Agenda papers (previously circulated), a copy of which will be attached to the signed Minutes.
<b>1175</b>	<b>Named Substitutes</b>	Mr P Middlebrough substituted for Mrs K May.
<b>1176</b>	<b>Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b>	Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Banks and Mrs K May
<b>1177</b>	<b>Confirmation of Minutes</b>	<b>RESOLVED: that the minutes of this meeting be circulated to Members of the Panel and be signed by the Chairman in the light of any comments on their accuracy received within 7 days of their circulation.</b>
<b>1178</b>	<b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b>	<b>RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it is likely that exempt information relating to any individual will be disclosed and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.</b>
<b>1179</b>	<b>Finance - Senior Management Changes</b>	<p>On 5 November 2018 the Appointments Panel agreed to the temporary extension of Steph Simcox's appointment to Head of Strategic Infrastructure, Finance and Financial Recovery, E&amp;I, COaCH and CEU Finance in order to allow time for the plans for a Finance Restructure to be developed. These plans were now in place and set out in the report considered by the Panel.</p> <p>The extension terminated on 5 May 2019, and at this point Steph Simcox was at risk of redundancy if there were no suitable alternative role.</p> <p>Sue Alexander had been employed at the Council in a number of roles, most recently in the post of Head of Financial Management (DAS &amp; CFC). She had expressed interest when the Council ran a Voluntary Redundancy exercise in November 2018 but this did not fall within the</p>

established cost parameters.

Whilst no guarantee could be given should Sue Alexander still wish to exit on redundancy terms, following informal discussion the Chief Financial Officer and HR believed this was likely, therefore reducing the potential to impose compulsory redundancy on a selected employee. Steph Simcox had indicated she wished to remain in a Head of Service Role at WCC.

Following a review of resources that had included a Finance Improvement Programme and with reference to the work on Worcestershire Children First, it had been identified that the structure going forward that best enabled the business to operate efficiently, was one which had an inward-facing role (ledger and controls – Chief Accountant), and also a client-focused (services management accounting support lead) role – Head of Finance. This structure was common across a range of councils, for example Gloucestershire, North Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire and Cornwall.

The Finance Improvement Programme had identified that a number of practices existed across all areas of the Council. There had also been slow progress to roll out self-service through the toolkit for budget managers to self-monitor their budgets. By reducing the Heads of Service there was a single focus for all work to go through in driving change.

The main change in the proposal would see fewer Heads of Service, and thus a saving. However, capacity would be built into the system through more qualified Principal Accountants. Detailed proposals were still being assessed, and no consultation had started on the details of this. However, it was necessary to change the leadership and management level first to ensure that the move to a 'self-service' financial model could be achieved. It was suggested that this would also give great support to the Council's governance and decision-making framework and foster more collaborative working.

CIPFA benchmarking had shown that this form would be consistent with other county councils.

The Panel agreed to the creation of the role of Head of Finance role as outlined in the report and considered the detail of the consultation process which resulted from the decision. It was noted that an expedited consultation process would reduce the stress and anxiety of the process for those involved and enable a swift resolution for each employee.

**RESOLVED that the following be approved:**

**(a) the permanent deletion of the following posts:**

- i. Head of Financial Management (DAS & CFC)**
  - ii. Head of Strategic Infrastructure, Finance and Financial Recovery, E&I, COaCH and CEU Finance;**
- (b) the creation of one permanent post, Head of Finance, with the job description and specifications set out at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (c) consultation is authorised, in accordance with the Council's policies, with the Head of Financial Management (DAS & CFC), Sue Alexander and the Head of Strategic Infrastructure, Finance and Financial Recovery, E&I COaCH and CEU Finance, Steph Simcox;**
- (d) that this new post could be suitable alternative employment for either impacted employee;**
- (e) that the Chief Financial Officer can explore whether either employee wishes to be considered for Voluntary Redundancy (VR) as is employee relations best practice;**
- (f) that should one of those 2 postholders be willing to agree to VR, the other be appointed to the new post;**
- (g) that should (i) neither postholder or (ii) both postholders be willing to agree to VR, then the matter will be brought back to Panel;**
- (h) that the employee who is not appointed to the new post will be considered at risk of redundancy, subject to consultation and in light of there being no current redeployment opportunities, that this may result in termination of employment; and**
- (i) the Chief Finance Officer, Michael Hudson, be authorised in consultation with the Head of HR and OD to make the necessary arrangements to put the above into effect including consultation, and the CFO is delegated authority to dismiss the unappointed employee by reason of redundancy.**

The meeting ended at 2.21pm

Chairman .....