

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 9 December 2004

PRESENT: Councillor Edwards (Chair); Councillor Crake (Deputy Chair);
Councillor Duncan

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Concannon and Simpson.

2. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

The Chair was of the opinion that the following item be discussed as a matter of urgency due to the delay if consideration of it was deferred.

DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS.

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor, copies of which were circulated seeking to adjust the existing delegations to Officers of the Council. He explained that given that the present Interim Directors had differing and more widely embracing responsibilities it was necessary to rationalise the delegations to the previous Directors to empower the Interim Directors to exercise those delegations relating to the functions for which they were responsible pending the appointment of the permanent Directors and the outcome of the current structural changes taking place.

RECOMMENDED: That Council be recommended to adjust the existing delegations to Officers to formally validate their exercise by the temporary Directors in respect of those functions for which they are responsible.

4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair moved that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that there was likely to be disclosure to them of such categories of exempt information as defined by Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 as listed against such items of business by reference to the appropriate paragraph of Schedule 12A to such Act.

The Motion was Carried.

5. DRAFT EARLY RETIREMENT/SEVERANCE SCHEME (1)

Consideration was given a report of the Chief Executive which was presented by the Interim Change Director outlining proposals for a new early retirement and severance scheme for employees of the Council and seeking approval to implement the scheme with effect from 10 December 2004. It was noted that consultation had taken place with the Trade Unions and they were content with the scheme. In considering the report particular attention was drawn to the Financial Implications as set out on page 6 paragraph 4 and the estimated financial impact as set out in paragraph 4.9 on page 7 of the report. Various additional notes were then circulated giving additional background information. These included information on severance arrangements from other Local Authorities the majority of which had received excellent ratings in their CPA report. There was also a caveat circulated from the Auditors and particular attention was drawn here to the fact that as suggested independent legal financial and HR advice had been sought in respect of the Scheme in order to protect Officers and the Council. There was also correspondence from the Chief Executive in response to points raised regarding Redundancy Strategy. The last note circulated was an addendum to the report to include a Diversity Impact Statement which effectively added an additional recommendation 6 to the 5 recommendations already listed in the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the recommendations contained therein with the addition of a recommendation 6 be approved as set out below:-

(1) That the proposed new early retirement and severance scheme relating to Council employees subject to an initial review of the Scheme no later than the 31 March 2006 (as set out in appendix 1 of the report) be approved.

(2) The implementation of the new scheme be approved with effect from 10 December 2004 subject to the ongoing financial sustainability of the Scheme, the approval from the Officer of the Deputy Prime Minister to capitalise the statutory elements of any payments made in this context and any further comments/advice from the Council's External Auditor.

(3) That subject to 2 above approval be given to the replacement of all existing Council arrangements in relation to early retirement and severance.

(4) The amendment of the Council's Statement of Discretions as set out in the Scheme in order to implement elements of the new scheme be approved.

(5) That the financial implications detailed in paragraph 4 be noted.

(6) That the Diversity Impact Statement as circulated be noted and endorsed.

The meeting concluded at 1835 hours.